Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
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FBIS-NES-95-053 *20 March 1995*

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Palestinian Affairs

PLO Executive Committee Meetings End in Tunis

JN1903073295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0600 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO Executive Committee meetings which began in Tunis on Friday, 17 March, ended last night. These meetings ended with an emphasis placed on the PLO's commitment to the peace process with Israel, that is, the continuation of the negotiations with Israel, while calling for direct participation by the two cosponsors of the peace process to save this initiative from collapse. The PLO Executive Committee held Israel responsible for such a collapse.

The final statement says the continuation of the negotiations now requires the direct participation of the United States, Russia, several other countries concerned with the peace process, particularly Egypt and the Arab parties involved in the peace process, Norway, and the EU to save the peace process, redress and assess the negotiating process, and return it to the form and content of the bases of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles signed in September 1993.

PLO Executive Committee Member Samir Ghawshah said it was agreed to establish a committee to follow up the negotiations comprising Palestinian National Authority [PNA] members.

The final statement holds Israel responsible for what the communique described as the undermining of the bases of the negotiations. The statement adds that Israel has transformed the ongoing negotiations into just a formal operation that revolves in a vicious circle, coupled with the implementation of the policy of collective punishment, the imposition of total closure, the perpetuation of siege and starvation, and the non-release of detainees. The statement says all these represent means of political pressure and seek to hamper the role of the PNA and the other national institutions. The statement also accuses Israel of taking unilateral and serious measures, under the pretext of security, that should be a matter for both the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

On the Israeli settlements, the PLO Executive Committee said the Israeli Government violates the Palestinians basic human rights, expands settlements in Jerusalem and isolates the city from the other Palestinian territories, continues to protect settlements in Hebron and to expand settlements and confiscate land throughout the occupied West Bank.

With respect to intra-Palestinian dialogue, the PLO Executive Committee decided to form a higher committee for national dialogue.

Before the final statement was issued, Samir Ghawshah had stated that the Executive Committee decided to invite Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, former head of the Palestinian delegation to the peace negotiations, and Salim al-Za'nun, speaker [as heard] of the Palestine National Council, to participate in the committee that holds dialogue with the Palestinian factions which oppose the peace process.

Qaddumi on Differences With 'Arafat

NC1903193295 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In an exclusive interview with MBC's correspondent in Tunis, PLO Political Department chief Faruq Qaddumi has denied that Abu-Mazin [PLO Executive Committee Member Mahmud 'Abbas] has accepted his appointment as head of the negotiating committee. He also disclosed part of his differences with the Palestinian President.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] President 'Arafat said in a statement that it was decided to designate Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, to head a committee to run the negotiations with Israel.

[Qaddumi] Brother Abu-'Ammar ['Arafat] asked Abu-Mazin to take up this task. But Abu-Mazin utterly rejected this because we are about to halt these futile negotiations and because of the futile performance of such negotiations and the Israeli intransigence.

The PLO Executive Committee's statement is clear in stating that they have reached a deadlock. For this reason, I do not believe that Abu-Mazin will take up this mission. He also refused to participate in the National Authority.

[Correspondent] Does this mean that the PLO has decided to suspend the bilateral talks?

[Qaddumi] I strongly demanded the suspension of these negotiations and there was a response from all the brothers. At the same time, this statement is a warning for Israel that if it pursues its stand, these negotiations will stop. Israel itself is responsible for halting these negotiations because it contradicts the agreement and tries not to implement it. Therefore, it is responsible for halting the negotiations and we will make this public at the appropriate time.

[Correspondent] Can we say that President 'Arafat has obtained support from the Fatah Movement and the PLO Executive Committee during these meetings?

[Qaddumi] Why should he need support? No, the PLO [pauses] the support should be for the institution and he is the chairman of the PLO. Support should go for a sound performance because we leveled a stinging criticism against the National Authority's performance.

[Correspondent] PLO employees in Tunis have not received their salaries for four months.

[Qaddumi] This is true. I did my best to raise some money and the national fund stopped paying salaries for our ambassadors and offices for four months. The

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national fund says we have no money but I doubt this. I know there is money but it has not arrived...

[Correspondent, interrupting] Why?

[Qaddumi, continuing] for four months. This is the disagreement between us.

[Correspondent] Between whom?

[Qaddumi] Between me and brother Abu-'Ammar. Frankly and clearly because he says he has no money and actually I do not know if this is true or not.

The Palestine issue is an Arab cause; it is the cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. If any Palestinian thinks he can resolve it on his own, he is mistaken. So this is part of the disagreement between us in the Executive Committee.

[Correspondent] Thank you. [end recording]

PLO Committee Statement

JN1903204595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 19 Mar 95

["Text" of PLO Executive Committee statement issued at the end of its meetings held in Tunis 16-18 March—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO Executive Committee met in Tunis under the chairmanship of brother Yasir 'Arafat on 16, 17, and 18 March. It discussed the current situation concerning the political process, the role of the PLO institutions, and the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], as well as the future tasks that will be shouldered by our people and their militant national forces.

The Executive Committee reaffirms the need to activate the PLO institutions and to exercise their role in leading the Palestinian people in all fields, inside and outside the homeland. In this respect, it has been decided to hold regular meetings for the Executive Committee and to help their departments assume their role to care for the interests and rights of our people, particularly our people outside the homeland, to underscore the unity of our people, their cause, and rights.

The Executive Committee discussed the mechanism of practicing its role as a reference for the PNA. It underscored the bases of civil society and honoring the responsibilities of the institutions, in accordance with the valid regulations and rules that should be fulfilled.

The Executive Committee tackled the financial situation and noted the need to prepare detailed reports on the status of the Palestine National Fund and the needs and resources of the PNA in order to study this matter in its next meeting.

The committee dwelt on the importance of reinforcing the national unity of our people and of all their struggling forces inside and outside the homeland. It decided to form a higher committee for national dialogue to strengthen and close the people's ranks so as to confront the current and coming challenges.

The Executive Committee studied the Palestinian-Israeli talks, particularly in the recent stage in which the government of Israel is placing obstacles and following the policy of procrastination with respect to the relocation [of the Israeli forces] and elections. It has also tried to impose preconditions that have nothing to do with the bases of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles. The government of Israel continues to violate the Palestinian people's basic human rights, expand settlements in Jerusalem, and isolate the city from the other Palestinian territories. It also continues to protect settlements in Hebron, expand settlements, and confiscate land throughout the West Bank. Israel takes unilateral and serious measures, under the pretext of security, which should be security for both the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

This Israeli policy has resulted in undermining the bases of negotiations. In fact, Israel has transformed the continuation of negotiations into a formality revolving in a vicious circle. This has been coupled with the implementation of the policy of collective punishment, the imposition of total closure, the perpetuation of siege and starvation, and the failure to release the detainees. All these represent means of political pressure and seek to tamper with the role of the PNA and the other national institutions. This situation and the collapse of the political process make us wonder about the use in continuing the negotiations under these circumstances. In light of this, the Executive Committee believes that the continuation of the negotiations now requires the direct participation of the cosponsors, a number of countries concerned with the peace process—particularly Egypt and the Arab parties involved in the peace process, Norway, and the EU—to save the peace process, and to assess and redress the negotiating process.

The Executive Committee will exert the necessary efforts and hold the required contacts with all involved parties and international bodies, including the Security Council, for this purpose.

On this occasion, the convening of this meeting in sisterly Tunisia, the Executive Committee expresses its gratitude and profound thanks to His Excellency President Zine El Abidine and the sisterly Tunisian people on this fraternal embrace and their sound principled support for Palestinian struggle.

Sha'th on 'Abbas Appointment as Negotiator

JN1903152095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1050 GMT 19 Mar 95

[Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, PA minister of planning and international cooperation, by Sa'id Mu'addi on 19 March; place not given; from the "With the Midday Events" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mu'addi] Dr. Nabil, does the return of [PLO] Executive Committee Member Mahmud

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'Abbas [alias Abu-Mazin] to the negotiating table with the Israeli side indicate a new strategy in these negotiations?

[Sha'th] The return of brother Abu-Mazin to assume his post in the committee overseeing negotiations—which was assumed temporarily by brother Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, member of the Executive Committee and the [Palestinian] Authority's council, and minister in the Palestinian Authority [PA]—is something we all look forward to and have called for. In fact, Abu-Mazin ran the Palestinian team that spearheaded the negotiating process in which we were all involved in Washington, Oslo, and in Cairo on Gaza and Jericho. The question of a new strategy is not solely related to the return of brother Abu-Mazin. On the contrary, it is related to the developments that took place on the negotiating scene and to the obstruction in this process. This obstruction was subject to continued and positive debate inside the Fatah Central Committee and the PLO Executive Committee.

[Mu'addi] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, it was decided to set up yet another committee to oversee talks under the chairmanship of Abu- Mazin. The problem is not negotiations [as heard], especially since there are many committees, the important thing is the fact that the PA should take practical measures in Gaza and Jericho in order to convince the Israeli side to continue the implementation of the second leg of the Declaration of Principles agreement.

[Sha'th] Of course the peace process has some requirements with regard to all parties. I believe that we are doing our utmost to meet these requirements. It is all the more clear that the measurers taken by the PA have checked, to a large extent, the military or violent operations that were taking place before. I believe that this is not just due to the Palestinian measures, but also due to the convictions of the Palestinians and their feeling of the pressure applied on the Palestinian street for full adherence to the peace process—adherence that would realize the parties' aspirations and would restore the land, freedom ,and independence of the Palestinian people. I believe the Palestinian side is becoming more committed to and effective in honoring its commitment. The Israeli side should exhibit similar commitment through continuing withdrawal, releasing prisoners, and meeting the requirements of the peace process.

Hamas Criticizes PLO Meetings in Tunisia

JN1903210395 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the recent meetings in Tunis, a responsible source from the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has stated that the weak results of these meetings are a prelude to more concessions, to humiliating agreements, and to bowing to the Zionists' dictates and conditions at the expense of our people's rights, aspirations, and continued jihad.

He added that while it is expecting a state of collapse. the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, calls on all the honorable and honest sons of our people to close ranks and preserve the Palestinian people's full national rights.

Islamic Jihad 'Mouthpiece' Resumes Publication

TA1803140295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The distribution of AL-ISTIQLAL, Islamic Jihad's mouthpiece, has resumed in the Gaza Strip following a two-month hiatus caused by the arrest of its editor and correspondents. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the paper publishes strident attacks on the Palestinian Authority and police. The articles particularly denounce the arrests of opposition leaders in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian police's inefficiency. Our correspondent points out that five of the paper's correspondents remain in custody.

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Algeria

TV Correspondent Attacked; Sister Killed

LD2003124595 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A terrorist group made an attempt to assassinate our colleague Rachida Hammadi, a correspondent at the national television, as she and her sister, Houria Hammadi, came out of their residence.

According to security services, Houria Hammadi, 36 years, has died, while Rachida, 32 years, has been taken to Ain Naadja [military hospital in Algiers] where she is being kept under medical observation.

The security services added that the perpetrators fled in a car, and that the security forces immediately started an extensive search operation to find them.

Sifi Indicates FIS Leaders Back in Prison

NC1903130695 Paris AFP in English 1133 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Paris, March 19 mars (AFP)—Algerian Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi hinted for the first time in an interview Sunday [19 March] that the two leaders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) might have been sent back to prison.

Speaking to the Arabic language ASHARQ AL-AWSAT, Sifi did not mention by name the two leaders who were put under house arrest in Algiers last September after being released from jail.

A month ago, the two—jailed in 1991—were separated and sent to new and as yet unidentified residences.

However, when the Arabic newspaper asked whether "the FIS leaders have been sent back to prison," Sifi replied: "Yes, some of them."

Giving credence to the idea that the FIS leaders are back in jail, the movement's military wing, the Army of Islamic Salvation (AIS), last week announced the nomination of an "interim national emir", Madani Merzak, claiming that the FIS had not had any contact with the "historic leaders of the movement for more than a month".

In the hope that the FIS leaders might help end the violence wracking Algeria, Madani and Belhadj, who were sentenced in 1991 to 12 years in jail for "attacks on the stability of the state", were released last September into house arrest.

Four other FIS leaders, given sentences of four years and another leader sentenced to six years, were released last February.

Speaking to the ASHARQ AL-AWSAT, Sifi said, however: "We rapidly realised that we were dealing with people (the FIS leaders) who either had no authority over those responsible for the violence or, worse, supported the violence."

The authorities in October released what they said was a letter from Belhadj to the armed fundamentalist groups supporting their action.

Thousands of people have died in nearly four years of brutal civil war between the armed fundamentalists and the military-backed state. International human rights groups accuse both sides of appalling violence and human rights violations.

Sifi told the ASHARQ AL-AWSAT, however, that the "political dialogue remained open" but said it did not involve the FIS "as a party" since it had been dissolved by the courts and since the Algerian constitution barred "the use of religious, ethnic or linguistic symbols by political parties".

Sifi also claimed that the presidential elections already announced for later this year would go ahead in the presence of international observers and said the armed groups "will not be able to stop them happening".

"The initiative is with the security forces," he added, though the armed groups would still be able to launch a few "spectaculars" such as "blowing up booby-trapped cars or killing individuals".

Separately, Mahfoud Nahnah, the leader of the moderate pro-Islamic Movement of the Islamic Society (MSI Hamas) claimed in an interview given to the French-language daily LE MATIN that political groups other than the FIS were now preparing to use arms in the Algerian conflict.

"Be aware that other political forces, outside the dissolved parties, have started preparing their troops here in Algeria and abroad," he told the paper.

The groups "who think that violence always bears fruit, are readying themselves to turn to terrorism. They are financially supported by certain states," he said, refusing to name either the groups or states involved.

Talking about armed Islamic groups, Nahnah said their "political cover" should be lifted so that "they cannot turn to terrorism in the name of Islam".

Meanwhile, the Arabic language AL-HAYAH newspaper said the FIS leader Abdelkader Hachani, who has been held in the Serkadji jail in Algiers since 1992 had gone on hunger strike.

Hachani, who is demanding to be brought before a court, has gone on hunger strike six times since being detained.

FIS Leader 'Committed' to Political Line

MM1703140495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Algeria: Amir of Salvation Front's Army Committed to Its Political Line"]

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[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Authoritative Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] sources stressed to AL-HAYAH yesterday that the front's military wing is still committed to the line of its political leadership. And that Madani Merzak did not seize leadership of the front by his appointment as "national amir" over all Algerian territory. However, the sources pointed out that his appointment was announced—for the first time—through the Shura Council, not the front's leadership in prison.

The sources stressed that the announcement of the appointment by a quarter other than the detained leaders does not mean that political powers are no longer in the hands of these leaders. [passage omitted]

FIS Denounces Killings of 'Innocent Civilians'

NC1803070595 Paris AFP in English 0102 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Paris, March 18 (AFP)—Algeria's banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) on Friday [17 March] denounced the killings of "innocent civilians" and accused the government of having been responsible for such attacks.

A statement from the FIS Parliamentary Delegation to Europe and the United States, received here, expressed "outrage at the latest killings of innocent civilians, especially women and children."

It said such "criminal acts are meant to serve the illegal junta, which has always aimed at spreading confusion through organized terror to force the population to submit to its will."

The front has been battling the military-backed Algerian government since January 1992, when authorities cancelled the second round of elections that FIS candidates were poised to win.

More than 6,000 civilians—including women, schoolchildren, journalists, artists and intellectuals—have been killed in the conflict, according to an official toll released last month.

Diplomatic estimates put the total number of deaths at 30,000.

Attacks on civilians have been largely attributed to the radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which unlike FIS has rejected negotiations with the government.

The FIS statement Friday stressed its opposition to and condemnation of "attacks against individual men and women who exercise their right of peaceful expression such as scholars, politicians, writers and journalists."

It charged that the government's rejection of a "national contract" adopted in January by the FIS and secular opposition forces "is testimony to its desire to prolong the vicious cycle of murders in which it has engaged the country since January 1992."

"We recognize that the majority of these killings point directly to the junta and its death squads."

Egypt

U.S. Vice President Al Gore Visits Cairo

Welcomed by Prime Minister

NC1903183795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1825 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—U.S. Vice President Al Gore arrived in Cairo this evening on a three-day visit to Egypt. He was received at the airport by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi. In a welcoming speech, Dr. Sidqi expressed his happiness at Al Gore's visit and stressed that it will achieve a big success. He said that the Egyptian-U.S. development partnership agreement that will be signed during Al Gore's visit will create new vistas in the economic Egyptian-U.S. ties.

Meets With Mubarak

NC2003100595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0850 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak this morning held a round of talks at the Presidential Palace headquarters with U.S. Vice President Al Gore within the framework of discussing technological, economic, and cultural cooperation between Egypt and the United States.

The talks were attended on the Egyptian side by Dr. Usamah al- Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs. On the American side, the talks were attended by Leon Fuerth, national security adviser to the vice president.

Gore, Mubarak Expand Meeting

NC2003114395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1050 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak continued his talks with U.S. Vice President Al Gore during an expanded meeting attended on the Egyptian side by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi; Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; 'Atif 'Ubayd, minister for the public business sector and minister of state for administrative development; Education Minister Dr. Husayn Kamil Baha'-al-Din; and Dr. Yusuf Butrus-Ghali, minister of state for international cooperation.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. Mahmud Muhammad Mahmud, minister of economy and foreign trade; Dr. Venice Kamil Judah, minister of state for scientific research; Dr. Zakariya 'Azmi, director of the Presidential Office; Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

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The expanded talks were attended on the U.S. side by Leon Fuerth, national security adviser to the vice president; U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Edward Walker; Brian Atwood, director of the U.S. AID; Under Secretary of State Joan Spero; Education Undersecretary Marshall Smith; Robert Pelletreau, assistant U.S. secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs; William Wise, assistant national security adviser to the vice president; and Lorraine Voles, director of communications for the U.S. vice president.

Mubarak, Gore Attend Accord Signings

NC2003114295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1115 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—At the presidential headquarters this afternoon, President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore attended the signing of three agreements between Egypt and the United States within the framework of bilateral technological, educational, and economic cooperation.

The first agreement deals with cooperation in the field of science and technology and was signed for the Egyptian side by Dr. Venice Kamil Judah, minister of state for scientific research, and for the U.S. side by Joan Spero, undersecretary of state for economic, agricultural, and business affairs in the U.S. Administration.

The second agreement deals with economic cooperation and was signed for the Egyptian side by Dr. Yusuf Butrus-Ghali, minister of state for international cooperation, and for the U.S. side by Brian Atwood, director of U.S. aid.

As for the third agreement, it deals with cooperation in the field of the environment and was signed for the Egyptian side by Education Minister Dr. Husayn Kamil Baha'-al-Din and the U.S. side by U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Edward Walker.

Mubarak, Gore Hold News Conference

NC2003114795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1128 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has reiterated the United States' permanent commitment to the region's issues and its full support for the peace process.

During a news conference held jointly with U.S. Vice President Al Gore, President Mubarak said: Egypt and the United States together made intensive efforts to advance the peace issue in the region to help us solve our problems. Other efforts are being made to promote bilateral economic and technical cooperation.

President Mubarak added: We have achieved tangible progress in this field and have established a joint economic committee. We also signed agreements to strengthen bilateral cooperation in every field. We will forge ahead with this course.

President Mubarak said in the speech he delivered at the beginning of the news conference he held with Al Gore: We will work together and make joint efforts to bolster the peace process and entrench it in the Middle East.

He added: We insist on working together to establish a just, comprehensive, and permanent peace in the region. We are resisting the forces of desperation that are trying to break our determination in this regard. Together, we condemn all acts that could hamper the peace process.

President Mubarak went on to say: We condemned cases of terrorism that prevent progress toward peace. We made great progress in this field and we spoke particularly about our economic affairs and trade and investment activities.

In this regard, Mubarak affirmed that relations between the United States and Egypt and their joint efforts have realized much success in this field.

President Mubarak said that he thanked U.S. Vice President Al Gore for his effective and active role in this field and the immense efforts he is making.

President Mubarak added: Our discussions addressed many issues. There was perfect agreement regarding all issues we discussed. An atmosphere of complete understanding prevailed during our discussions. I wish to extend my greetings to U.S. President Bill Clinton and to the American people.

The U.S. vice president then delivered a speech at the beginning of the joint news conference with President Husni Mubarak in which he expressed thanks to President Mubarak as an admirable personality who has gained great respect in the world and the region. He said that it was a great honor for him to meet with President Mubarak today.

Vice President Gore added: For two and a half hours, we discussed many issues of interest to our two countries. We exchanged a number of personal viewpoints. President Mubarak expressed his kind sentiments regarding what happened to my son in the United States when he was involved in an accident.

The U.S. vice president said: We have had the opportunity to work together for some time. We have great confidence in, and deep respect for each other, which is an important factor.

Al Gore quoted the saying that "whoever drinks the water of the Nile will eventually return to the Nile." We return to Egypt to enhance and cement ties of bilateral friendship and cooperation, he said.

The U.S. vice president added: When I visited Cairo last September on behalf of U.S. President Bill Clinton, we set out to implement several economic projects in both

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the public and private sectors to consolidate the Egyptian economic establishments and enhance the role of the private sector.

Gore continued: These economic initiatives serve the interests of both the American and Egyptian peoples, since our basic goal is to develop joint interests that serve both our countries.

He added: We discussed this subject. We are deeply satisfied with the progress made in this connection. There is also the bilateral agreement on the transfer of technology, which intensifies efforts to transfer technology and eventually benefit the various economic areas in Egypt.

In his statement, Gore emphasized that Egypt is the cornerstone of the regional peace process, since it was the first state to make peace with Israel. We largely depend on President Mubarak's role within this context so that we can take the peace process forward.

Gore added: President Mubarak knows the hardships involved in and the obstacles hindering the peace process. We denounced the terrorist operation that occurred in Hebron yesterday, because such occurrences can hamper the Middle East peace process, he said.

The U.S. vice president continued: We agreed that Egypt and the United States should continue to try to consolidate the peace process. This shows that the role Egypt and the United States are playing is central, designed to take the process to safety. We will therefore exchange visits and consultations forcefully.

The U.S. vice president added: This morning we began the work of the joint committee on economic development. There are several subcommittees. President Clinton and I benefited greatly from President Mubarak's views on Middle East peace, Gore said, pointing out that other committees will immediately start implementing the developed agenda.

He pointed out that President Mubarak will meet many officials in advisory councils in the United States when he visits Washington in April.

President Mubarak and Al Gore then answered correspondents' questions.

U.S. Vice President Gore was asked about the economic partnership process that seeks to serve the interests of the Egyptian and American people. He replied: I believe this is the beginning of a positive phase in bilateral relations. We agreed that our experts will work to cement cooperation between us.

He added: There are no restrictions or limits on expanding this cooperation. For our part, we arrived at this partnership to make Egypt feel that its relations with the United States are the best they can be.

Gore stressed the need to give private enterprise the opportunity to expand investment in Egypt to create more job opportunities for the Egyptian people and enhance relations. He remarked that the issue was no coincidence, because there have been studies to enhance this joint effort, which is bound to serve the Middle East peace process and achieve prosperity for the region's peoples.

The U.S. vice president emphasized that prosperity will not be achieved in the Middle East unless peace is established.

Asked about the role the United States can play to push the peace process ahead, Gore said: I do not believe the peace process is deadlocked. There can be a dialogue to settle differences and there can be an open dialogue between Syria and Israel.

Pointing out that there is progress in the ongoing dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians, he expressed the belief that some progress will be made in the peace process in the coming period.

We appreciate the big role President Mubarak is undertaking in this connection, he said, referring to the four-way summit President Mubarak hosted in Cairo recently.

Gore pointed out that all these issues will be discussed with U.S. President Bill Clinton during President Mubarak's visit to Washington. We are trying to make progress in the peace process, with special emphasis on intensive consultations with Egypt, he said.

The U.S. vice president was asked about the two Americans who were arrested after entering Iraq by mistake and the measures Washington plans to take to release them. He replied: We are requesting their release promptly and appeal to the arresting parties to release them. I believe that what I am saying is not new. We hope they will be released soon.

He was then asked about reports that cooperation between Egypt and the United States will fall back and about the guarantees for full partnership between the two countries. He said: First, I would like to say that President Clinton's government has committed itself to giving some assistance to Egypt. We recognize the role Egypt is playing to consolidate peace and stability in the region and to boost the peace process. We are asking Congress to maintain or stay committed to the amount of aid to Egypt.

Gore added: The full economic partnership we worked out is an admission by the United States and recognition of the role Egypt plays in the region. Investment must be increased and the Egyptian economy must be pushed forward.

Asked about concerns the Israeli nuclear program is causing Egypt and the Arab world, Gore pointed out that the U.S. position on the issue and on signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty is clear and declared. We do not think the extension of the Treaty should be linked with issues of this sort, so that we can achieve our objectives in the Middle East, he said.

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The U.S. vice president added that there are some sensitive issues. We know that Egypt and Israel will discuss the issue and any outstanding issues. I believe this dialogue will be positive and will certainly lead to an acceptable formula, he said.

Asked if peace agreements between the Arabs and Israel would affect U.S. aid to Egypt, Al Gore said: I do not think so. I would like to say that we believe that reaching new peace agreements like that signed between Jordan and Israel enhances Egypt's leadership in the region and helps recognize the role it plays in this regard.

The U.S. vice president added that Egypt has played a pioneering role to reach these agreements between the Arabs and Israel. He pointed out that peace will bring safety and prosperity to all and raise the standard of living of the region's people.

Gore pointed out that relations between the United States and Egypt are based on the appreciation of Egypt's leadership and pioneering role in establishing and consolidating peace and security in the region. He added that Egypt is a very important country for the United States and that the latter relies considerably on Egypt's pioneering role in this connection.

The U.S. vice president added: We do not expect aid to continue indefinitely. The level of aid might diminish and we understand this perfectly.

He emphasized that the peace process will add much to Egyptian- U.S. relations in various fields, particularly the economic and technological fields. What counts is to enhance bilateral relations, he remarked.

Asked what has been done to provide assistance to the Palestinians, Gore replied that he believes the donor states should provide assistance to the Palestinians soon so that they can build the necessary infrastructure. The donor states should be persuaded to do that promptly, he said.

The U.S. vice president noted that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher discussed this issue with officials in several donor states and establishments to persuade them to provide assistance to the Palestinians soon.

Papers: Gore Visit 'First Step in New Stage' of Ties

NC2003072095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0615 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—AL-AHRAM and AL- JUMHURIYAH highlight the importance of U.S. Vice President Al Gore's visit to Cairo and his talks with President Husni Mubarak and Egyptian officials on 20 March.

AL-AHRAM says in its editorial that the main purpose of Gore's visit to Cairo is to ratify the agreement already drawn up to implement the Mubarak-Gore initiative on Egyptian-U.S. cooperation, which established the basis for activating bilateral trade exchange in favor of Egypt's export objectives.

It adds that President Mubarak's talks with the U.S. vice president will also deal with the peace process in the region and the Egyptian-Israeli dispute over renewing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. It stresses that the main purpose of the visit is to ratify the agreements that legislate cooperation between Egypt and the United States. It then says: The time has come for this legislation, which ensures regular and continuing relations between the two sides, since this fundamental basis has been established and neither of the two sides' interests have prompted abandoning or cooling these relations.

AL-AHRAM goes on to say: The Mubarak-Gore initiative confirms that the Egyptian and U.S. sides have reached maturity in their understanding of each other. They fully realize that their strategic relationship will remain stronger than any political differences that might arise through different views, concepts, and priorities.

It refers in this regard to Egypt's relationship with the United States, which is similar to U.S. ties with Israel, Britain, France, Germany, and other traditionally friendly countries. It adds: Differences emerge quite often between the United States and these countries but they remain differences between friends, not enemies, while all other aspects of relations and cooperation remain active and constant.

Concluding its editorial, AL-AHRAM says: This is significant for Egypt and the United States and is part of a fundamental Egyptian political line that is not limited to the United States; it includes the Egyptian-European Union partnership plan and the Egyptian- Japanese partnership plan.

AL-JUMHURIYAH writes that Gore's visit to Cairo, marking the start of his Middle East tour, constitutes the first step in a new stage in Egyptian-U.S. relations and will take bilateral cooperation into the technological spheres that the development process in Egypt needs.

It notes that in Cairo, President Mubarak and the U.S. vice president will sign a new economic agreement according to which the U.S. Administration will back plans to transfer technology, develop Upper Egypt, and promote tourism in Sinai and the Red Sea through the U.S. aid program to Egypt.

The paper says the agreement with the United States completes a circle begun by Egypt in cooperation with Germany, the Mubarak-Kohl project, and then with Japan during President Mubarak's visit there last week. It adds: With regard to development in Upper Egypt and Sinai, Egypt has prepared a complete investment map and facilitated investment procedures for new projects with a capital of up to 45 million pounds, and is giving free land to the serious investor in Upper Egypt.

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It concludes its editorial by saying that cooperation between Egypt and the United States is moving, in its new stage, toward tourism and development projects and that this bilateral cooperation marks a new and successful phase of development.

Musa Discusses Ties With Israel, Iran, Iraq

NC1803092495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0810 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has emphasized that Egypt rejects "an Israeli peace", since peace should be "an Arab-Israeli peace."

In an interview with London radio this morning, the foreign minister cautioned that the peace process is proceeding slowly, or rather regressing, and that "it might fail."

Responding to a question on Egyptian-Israeli differences, Musa said that differences arise from the fact that we see matters "with an Arab perspective" rather than an Israeli perspective.

He added: We have a specific viewpoint that we have expressed, still express, and will continue to express. We believe that the peace process is taking the wrong course. But Israel and its officials are not accustomed to differences with anyone, even superpowers. He confirmed that Egypt will continue to say what it believes.

In his interview with London radio, Musa pointed out that the Egyptian political establishment has always had a clear-cut policy in its pan-Arab, national, and regional approaches. He added that things have started to be presented in a clearer manner. In the past, there was enemy and friend, war and peace, he said, but now there are so many issues. There is talk about a new regional order and the indefinite renewal of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, he explained.

The foreign minister denied there was any clash with the West or the United States. There clearly are differences of views on certain points, he pointed out, adding that the two main points concern the Middle East peace process. We refuse to have an Israeli peace, because it should be an Arab-Israeli peace, he said. He added that the second point is related to the Israeli nuclear program.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said that there are no fundamental differences between us and the West. We are talking about a Middle Eastern policy and about new relations with the European Union. At this stage, we are specifically negotiating the establishment of a free-trade zone, he said. He added: We receive many American officials, exchange visits with them, and talk candidly about many issues.

Replying to a question on Egyptian-Iranian relations, Musa said that relations with Iran are complex. He stressed a couple of points, however, mainly that the Iranian people are "a fraternal people" and that Iran is a Middle Eastern country.

He added: We certainly have common interests with Iran that are beneficial for both sides. However, he added, there is a crisis involving Iran that has to do with the United Arab Emirates' islands, Iran's policy toward the Arab region and the Islamic world, and the related accusations against Iran. He asserted that the Iranian side must clarify this matter beyond any doubt in order to reassure everyone.

The foreign minister pointed out that Iran can overcome these two obstacles, and expressed the belief that this would be in its interest because, basically, Iranian-Arab relations must be constructive, sound, and firm.

Replying to a question about the Iraqi people's suffering as a result of the blockade imposed on Iraq since its invasion of Kuwait in 1990, 'Amr Musa called for easing their suffering. He agreed that the Iraqi regime was naturally responsible for the Iraqi people's present condition and that "we do not accept collective responsibility for the Iraqi people's suffering."

Mubarak Receives Israeli Knesset Members

NC1903123195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1140 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received a delegation of Israeli Knesset members at the Presidential Office this afternoon.

The delegation is made up of the Knesset's Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Ori Or, plus Dr. Binyamin-Ze'ev Begin, Zvulun Hammer, Ya'el Dayan, Moshe Peled, and Labor Party Secretary General Nisim Zvili.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Muhammad 'Abdallah, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee in the People's Assembly, and Dr. Mufid Shihab, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Consultative Council. Israel's Ambassador in Cairo David Sultan was present.

The Israeli delegation arrived in Cairo earlier today.

Prime Minister To Receive Jordanian Counterpart

NC1603142695 Paris AFP in English 1157 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, March 16 (AFP)—Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd Bin-Shakir was due to hold talks with his Egyptian counterpart 'Atif Sidqi in Cairo Thursday [16 March] on Iraq and the renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The prime ministers would co-chair a session of the Egyptian- Jordanian higher committee, which last met

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on July 28, 1990, two days before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti told AFP here.

"The two sides will stress their commitment to a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction," said al-Kabariti, accompanying Shaker on his visit.

Jordan was still considering three options on the NPT, which comes up for renewal at the United Nations in April. Al-Kabariti said Jordan could opt for an indefinite renewal, a 25-year extension or a 25-year extension renewed every five years.

Relations between Egypt and Israel have been strained in recent months by Egypt's threat not to sign the NPT extension unless Israel signs the treaty.

Al-Kabariti said Jordan and Egypt would also review Iraq's "positive moves" to encourage confidence, including Baghdad's recognition in October of Kuwait's borders Kuwait.

"The mutilation of Iraq is a danger for the region," he said, referring to the UN trade and oil embargo imposed on Baghdad after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The embargo was renewed Monday.

Egypt accused Jordan of supporting Baghdad during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

However, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Jordan's King Husayn set the seal on their reconciliation at a meeting in the Jordanian Red Sea port of Aqaba on January 21 and decided to boost cooperation.

Al-Kabariti said the higher committee's discussions "will lead to a comprehensive economic, trade and cultural agreement."

Egypt and Jordan are the two only Arab states to have signed peace treaties with Israel—Egypt in 1979 and Jordan last October.

Security Forces Kill Three 'Terrorists'

NC1803163595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1555 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—Three terrorists were killed in a clash with the security organs in the Markaz Samalut, al-Minya Governorate, Upper Egypt, as they were planning to carry out a number of hostile actions targeting one of the police installations in Markaz Samalut.

A responsible security source in the interior ministry said today: Security data and information received by the State Security intelligence service indicated that a group of terrorists were planning to carry out a hostile action against the police installations in Markaz Samalut in the al-Minya Governorate.

The source added: Following receipt of this information and after taking the necessary legal measures, a night ambush was set-up last night on the road leading to the targeted area on one of the mountain roads in Markaz Samalut near to (al-Khirijin) village so as to capture these elements. As the terrorists were preparing to commit their criminal act, the security force asked them to surrender but they opened-fire on the security men who immediately fired back.

The source went on to say: As a result of the firing, terrorist Sha'ban 'Abd-al-Tawwab Riyadh, resident of Tandah village, Markaz Mallawi, al-Minya, Upper Egypt, was killed. He was one of the fugitive terrorists wanted in four cases of violence. Terrorist Muhammad Dakhili, resident of Minshat al-Mughalaqah, Mallawi, was killed. He was an active terrorist who took part in a number of violent acts and recent assassinations in Markaz Mallawi, the last of which was the attempt to assassinate a manager in Minshat al- Mughalaqah. The exchange of gun fire also resulted in the death of terrorist Faraj Mir'i 'Abd-al-Salam, resident of Tirfah Samalut, an active terrorists who took part in violent acts in Markaz Samalut and Bani Mazar.

The source added that the security forces seized with the terrorists a 39-mm automatic rifle, two Russian-made pistols, and a large quantity of weapons and ammunition, and organizational papers. Explosives experts and technicians from the criminal laboratory moved to the site. This security operations against the terrorist remnants is in conjunction with the security organs' plan to foil and abort the terrorist plans and capture the fugitive terrorists. The prosecution office has been informed in order to start investigations.

Police Round Up 1,250 Suspected Militants

NC1903125495 Paris AFP in English 1108 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Al-Minya, Egypt, March 19 (AFP)—Police have arrested around 1,250 suspected Islamic militants and supporters in a series of raids in southern Egypt in the last five days, police said Sunday [19 March].

More than 850 people were arrested in the Samalut region, 225 kilometres (140 miles) south of Cairo, in a police sweep of 66 villages which began Tuesday.

Another 400 young men were rounded up in the Mallawi region, 300 kilometres (185 miles) south of the capital.

The detainees include a large number of schoolboys. Witnesses said some youths were arrested while at school.

The raids began after Islamic militants shot and seriously wounded a policeman in a Samalut street on March 13, police said.

Police mainly targeted villages bordering desert areas around the town, where militants often use mountain caves as hideouts.

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Three militants, including the leader of the outlawed armed al- Jama'ah Islamiyyah (Islamic Group) for Mallawi, were killed in a shootout with police near Samalut on Friday.

The shooting raised to 676 the number of deaths in a three-year- old Islamic militant campaign to overturn Egypt's secular government.

Most attacks take place in the southern province of al-Minya, the stronghold of armed fundamentalists.

Three thousand people, most of them youths aged 17 to 25, were arrested in al-Minya in mid-February on suspicion of belonging to militant groups. More than 2,000 of them were released on March 4 to mark the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Libya

Daily Criticizes West's 'Pressure' on Egypt

LD1903125495 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1030 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tripoli, 19 Mar—In today's issue, the newspaper AL-ZAHF AL-AKHDAR [THE GREEN MARCH] criticizes Western media reports and their distortions, saying that Egypt had agreed to renew the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] even if Israel still refuses sign it.

The leading article of the newspaper says that despite our certainty that the report was false and our knowledge of the inflexibility of the Egyptian stance on this fateful issue in particular, circulating this report does not give rise to joy in any way. [passage omitted]

The paper explains that the West tried by circulating this fabricated report to put Egypt into an erroneous position and force it to sign the treaty. [passage omitted]

AL-ZAHF AL-AKHDAR says that the Wests' attempts, and in particular America, to apply pressure on Egypt or threaten it with reduction or stoppage of aid are absurd and have no value, but they must not be a reason for making concessions on this nuclear matter, whatever the circumstances.

The paper concludes that Egypt will not die of starvation and the Egyptian people are capable of surviving away from the false Western gifts. However, the Egyptian people will die in a flash despite its population numeral superiority if they do not halt Israel's nuclear thrust, by finding a similar deterrent weapon. The paper says that there is no other solution. Any solution away from the counter weapon or signing the treaty will be a sham solution at Egypt's expense and President Husni Mubarak will not condone such a solution.

Trade Monitoring Accord Signed With Algeria

LD1903211995 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A customs cooperation accord with Algeria was signed today in Algiers. APS said that the minutes of the agreement, signed by the director general of customs in the Great Jamahiriyah and brother Brahim Chaib Cherif, director general of customs in Algeria, called for strengthening cooperation between the two departments, within the framework of the agreement between two fraternal countries within the spheres of monitoring goods and commodities, combating fraud and smuggling, and exchanging information and expertise.

Security Office Says 2 Executed for Murder

LD1903202995 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the secretariat of the General People's Committee for Justice and Public Security said death sentences were carried out today on a group of criminals in implementation of judicial sentences, endorsed by the Supreme Court, and the Higher Council of Judicial Institutions, for committing premeditated murders for trivial and base reasons in a brutal manner and that reflected criminal and aggressive behavior.

The proceedings of carrying out those sentences, together with the issue of the committed crimes, will be shown in the forthcoming parts of the "Security and Community" program [1730 GMT 22 Mar] [Video shows two people dressed in red accompanied by officer reading out indictment]

Sudan

Hijacked Ethiopian Airliner Lands in Kordofan

EA1703182595 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1305 today, a Boeing-737 Ethiopian Airlines passenger airliner landed at al-Ubayyid, northern Kordofan, with 85 Ethiopian passengers in addition to its crew of seven on board. Culture and Information Minister 'Abd-al-Basit Sabdarat said the aircraft was on an internal flight from Addis Ababa to Bahir Dar in Gonder Zone, Ethiopia. The Ethiopian authorities have been informed about the matter. The Sudanese Government is continuing its contacts with the hijackers in al-Ubayyid. Information will be given about any new developments in due course.

Talks Begin; Some Passengers Released

EA1703210995 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At 1305 today, a Boeing-737 Ethiopian Airlines passenger airliner landed at al-Ubayyid, northern Kordofan, with 85 Ethiopian passengers in addition to its crew of seven on board. Culture and Information Minister 'Abd-al-Basit Sabdarat said the aircraft was on an internal flight from Addis Ababa to Bahir Dar in Gonder Zone, Ethiopia. The Ethiopian authorities have been informed about the matter. The

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Sudanese Government is continuing its contacts with the hijackers in al-Ubayyid. Information will be given about any new developments in due course.

The radio reporter at al-Ubayyid says the aircraft landed at al- Ubayyid Airport, and that negotiations are now in progress with the hijackers. The negotiations for the release of the passengers and aircraft are being conducted by North Kordofan State Governor Muhammad al-Hasan al-Amin. A number of passengers have been released. On this subject, North Kordofan State Governor Muhammad al-Hasan al-Amin made the following statement to our reporter at al- Ubayyid:

[Begin al-Amin recording] This afternoon at about 1330, a hijacked aircraft landed at al-Ubayyid, north Kordofan. [passage omitted]

The aircraft has 92 persons on board. Eighty are regular passengers on the internal flight, seven are crew members, and five are hijackers. After the aircraft landed, we began contacts with it. There was contact with the captain and one of the passengers. The hijackers asked to be supplied with fuel to resume their flight out of Sudan. Negotiations with the captain and a citizen are now in progress to contact the hijackers. Thank God all the passengers are safe, and the aircraft is still on the runway of al-Ubayyid Airport. We have taken all the precautions to ensure the safety of the passengers and the aircraft, God willing. [passage omitted] [end recording]

One Ethiopian Hijacker Arrested

NC1803120295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1050 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 18 Mar (MENA)—The hijackers of the Ethiopian plane that landed in the al-Abyad airport in northern Kordofan have released an unknown number of women and children. The release came in the wake of negotiations with an Ethiopian delegation that had just arrived in Sudan.

Sudanese Minister of Culture and Information 'Abd-al-Basit Sidrat said that the negotiations conducted by the Ethiopian delegation, as well as those held yesterday evening by a Sudanese Government delegation, made progress toward a final solution to the problem. He added that negotiations continue.

He said in a statement a short while ago that no human casualties have occurred so far and that the hijackers have certain demands, which have not been publicized.

The MENA correspondent in Khartoum has learned that the plane's pilot, who had earlier left the place with one of the hijackers, has refused to return to the plane. Moreover, the hijacker who accompanied him to hold negotiations with the government delegation via loudspeaker has been arrested.

Our correspondent has learned also that the hijackers are of the Ethiopian (Aromo) clan. They rejected the pilot's proposal to head for Saudi Arabia or Egypt, requesting him to fly the plane to Libya. However, the plane's fuel limitations precluded that.

All Five Hijackers Surrender

AB1803124895 Paris AFP in English 1140 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, March 18 (AFP)—Five hijackers who seized an Ethiopian airliner with 92 people aboard and forced it to fly to western Sudan surrendered to authorities on Saturday [18 March], the official Sudanese News Agency, SUNA reported. It said all the plane's 85 passengers and seven crew were unharmed at the airport in al-Ubayyid, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) southwest of Khartoum.

SUNA said the released passengers included 10 Europeans, but not specify their nationalities. SUNA said the hijackers had demanded political asylum in Sudan, but there were no further details immediately available on the terms of their surrender.

The Boeing 737 was hijacked Friday while on a domestic flight from Addis Ababa to Bahir Dar (eds correct) in northwest Ethiopia. Suna said the hijackers were armed with knives and initially demanded to go to Sweden.

They allowed the pilot to land at al-Ubayyid for refuelling, it said. Negotiations were held at al-Ubayyid by teams of Ethiopian and Sudanese officials, the agency said. As the negotiations proceeded, the hijackers released 20 women and children earlier Saturday.

The Sudanese team included the minister at the presidency, Abdul Rahim Mohamed Hussein, Energy Minister Salah Eddin Karar and Information Minister 'Abd-al-Basit Sabdarat.

They were joined Saturday by senior defense and interior ministry officials from Ethiopia, who were present at the time of the surrender, Suna said.

Hijacking Ends After Negotiations

EA1803152795 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This afternoon the hijacking of the Ethiopian passenger airliner ended at the airport of al-Ubayyid, the capital of the State of Northern Kordofan. Four hijackers surrendered while the fifth was arrested by the security forces as he disembarked with the first group of passengers released by the hijackers.

The hijackers surrendered after negotiations with, among others, a federal delegation led by Brigadier 'Abd-al-Rahim Muhammad Husayn, minister of the presidency of the Republic; Mr. 'Abd-al-Basit Sabdarat, minister of culture and information; Brig. Hasan Dahawi; Retd Brig. Salah Karrar, minister of energy and mining; Dr. Ali al- Hajj Muhammad, minister in the offices of the offices of the federal administration; and

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Ahmad Ibrahim al-Tahir, counselor in the office of the president of the Republic. Also taking part in the negotiations was an Ethiopian delegation led by the deputy head of the Ethiopian intelligence organ as well as members of the Ethiopian Embassy in Khartoum and members of the government of Northern Kordofan. [passage omitted]

Surrender Exchanged for Asylum Pledge

AB1803173395 Paris AFP in English 1658 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Khartoum, March 18 (AFP)—Five hijackers who seized an Ethiopian airliner with 92 people aboard and forced it to fly to Sudan surrendered to authorities on Saturday [18 March] in exchange for pledges regarding political asylum, the news agency SUNA reported.

All the plane's 85 passengers and seven crew were released unharmed at the airport in al-Ubayyid, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) southwest of Khartoum, the official Sudanese agency said. The passengers included four French and three US nationals, and two Swedes and one Dane.

SUNA said the hijackers had agreed to surrender in exchange for a written promise from the Sudanese government to help them secure political asylum in Sweden.

There was no immediate reaction from the government over the reported surrender deal.

But Sweden's ambassador in Cairo, Jan Stahl, denied a deal had been struck for asylum, telling AFP: "We have received no request and issued no promise. We have nothing to do with this and the matter is closed."

The Boeing 737 was hijacked Friday while on a domestic flight from Addis Ababa to Bahir Dar in northwest Ethiopia. SUNA said the hijackers, who were all Ethiopians, were armed with knives and initially demanded to go to Sweden via Greece.

They allowed the pilot to land at al-Ubayyid for refuelling, it said. SUNA quoted the pilot as saying he believed the hijackers had no political motives for their actions and simply wanted to leave Ethiopia.

Negotiations were held at al-Ubayyid by teams of Ethiopian and Sudanese officials, the agency said.

As the negotiations proceeded, the hijackers released 20 women and children earlier Saturday. [passage omitted]

Assembly Speaker Receives Iranian Delegation

EA1703180795 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, in his office today, discussed with His Excellency Hoseyn Sheykh ol-Islam, Iran's deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs, areas of cooperation between the two brotherly countries to achieve solidarity and cooperation between the states of the Islamic nation, and to exchange expertise and experiences in applying Islamic shari'ah. The Iranian official affirmed that Iranian-Sudanese relations are deep-rooted. He emphasized the need to strengthen links in various sectors, particularly the trade sector. The meeting dealt with ways of strengthening relations between the Transitional National Assembly and the Iranian Islamic Consultative Assembly, and ways of coordinating their positions in the international parliamentary fora to serve the cause of the Islamic nation.

Tunisia

Five Economic Agreements Signed With China

LD1803213995 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunisia and China today signed five cooperation agreements in economic and trade fields. These agreements were signed by Trade Minister Slaheddine Ben M'barek and Yi Wu, Chinese minister of foreign trade and economic cooperation.

Slaheddine Ben M'barek expressed the Tunisian Government's pleasure at the bolstering of economic and commercial cooperation with China and the prospects for this cooperation. He observed that the aim of the Tunisian-Chinese talks was to improve the rate of coverage of the trade balance.

The Chinese minister expressed the Chinese Government's determination to make up the deficit recorded in the level of trade exchanges between the two countries and its resolve to develop bilateral exchanges.

President Issues Pardons on Independence Day

LD1803195095 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Zine El Abdiine Ben Ali this morning met at the Carthage Palace Justice Minister Sadok Chaabane and Interior Minister Mohamed Jegham. On the occasion of Independence Day, within the framework of the head of state's firm humanitarian principles and his particular concern for the rehabilitation of prisoners and facilitating their reintegration into economic and social life, the president has decided to grant a pardon to a number of convicted prisoners who have undergone a period of training under the special rehabilitation program. [passage omitted]

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Gulf Foreign Ministers Meet on Iraqi Embargo

NC1903132795 Paris AFP in English 1256 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, March 19 (AFP)—Gulf Arab foreign ministers began a two-day meeting here Sunday [19 March] to try to decide a united stance on the UN embargo on Iraq.

Sources close to the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said the foreign ministers of Oman and Qatar would brief the meeting on their talks with their Iraqi counterpart Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf last week.

Muscat and Doha have called for an easing of crippling sanctions imposed on Baghdad by the United Nations after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Oman defended its stand Saturday, saying it was not trying to harm the interests of fellow GCC member Kuwait or create divisions with other Gulf monarchies.

"What the sultanate wants to highlight is the suffering of the Iraqi people because of the embargo and that question cannot be the subject of differences between our brothers in the GCC," Foreign Minister Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah told the OMAN daily.

The GCC, which also groups Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, agreed that the embargo should continue until Baghdad complied with all Gulf War ceasefire resolutions, following talks with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Jiddah a week ago.

The meeting here will also cover relations with Iran, developments in the Middle East peace process and the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, officials said.

The UAE and Iran are locked in a sovereignty dispute over three strategic islands at the entrance to the Gulf.

The GCC foreign ministers last met in December in Bahrain.

Bahrain

Opposition Spokesman Cited on New Demonstrations

JN1903190895 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Bahraini opposition sources have said that demonstrations have been staged over the past two days and that a number of opposition figures in Bahrain were arrested.

The London-based Movement of Bahrain's Freemen [harakat ahrar al-bahrayn] contacted our radio today to say that 'Abd-al-Wahhab Husayn, member of the committee that signed a document calling for reinstating the Constitution, was arrested the day before yesterday in the village of al-Nuwaydirat. This arrest, the movement spokesman said, sparked demonstrations in al-Nuwaydirat, Sitrah, Bilad al-Qadim, Sanabis, and al-Diraz. Also, Hasan al-Mushshayn' and Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-'Akari were arrested

Kuwait

Two Would-Be Bush Assassins Sentenced to Death

NC2003120095 Paris AFP in English 1148 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, March 20 (AFP)—A Kuwaiti appeal court on Monday [20 March] confirmed death sentences against two Iraqis for plotting to kill former US president George Bush in 1993, legal officials said.

Ra'id al-Asadi and Wali al-Ghazali were considered the masterminds of the plot to kill Bush during a visit to Kuwait in 1993. They were sentenced to death last June.

The appeal court overturned the death sentences of three other Iraqis and a Kuwaiti involved in the plot, replacing them with jail terms.

Saudi Arabia

Perry's Mission Said To Set Up 'Permanent' Base

JN1903173795 Paris AL-MUHARRIR in Arabic 20 Mar 95 p 8

[Report by 'Abd-al-Salam Masarwah from Washington]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite the fact that the Pentagon described the visit to the Gulf by U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry as cordial and reassuring, the information leaking from the Department of Defense indicates that the main objective of the tour is to directly supervise a plan that will turn Saudi territory into "a permanent military base" for U.S. forces.

The tour began last Friday and will continue until Thursday, 23 March. This tour will take Perry to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. He will not visit Muscat because Vice President Al Gore will visit the Sultanate. During this tour, William Perry will inspect the U.S. forces stationed in

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various areas in the Gulf. However, the real mission of the secretary will be the adoption of procedural decisions related to the establishment of "a permanent military base." A Pentagon official said that his country still wants to set up such a base. The procedural decisions will be taken during Perry's meetings with the ranking U.S. officers in charge of the forces stationed in the Gulf. These forces are comprised of the following: 1,300 members of the Air Force; 5,000 Marines; 2,000 members of the Navy; and 1,300 members of the Army; in addition to their hardware and weapons.

AL-MUHARRIR has learned from U.S. sources, who are well versed in the details of the plan, that different viewpoints appeared in Saudi Arabia. Some support the idea while others object to it. Therefore, the secretary's mission is to undo the knot and ensure consensus on the plan, which is falls under the Pentagon's plan for the double containment of Iran and Iraq while maintaining the card of threatening the Gulf countries with the danger coming from Baghdad, Tehran, or from both countries.

It is noteworthy that the administration of Bill Clinton has decided to dispatch its secretaries on missions throughout the world to abort Republican efforts aimed at redistributing the military budget in a manner contrary to the Democrats' calculations.

Daily Comments on Gore's Upcoming Visit

LD1903093295 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0310 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 19 Mar—The Saudi papers appeared today with the following headlines. [passage omitted]

AL-BILAD comments on the upcoming visit of U.S. Vice President Al Gore on Wednesday [22 March] to the Kingdom—the third visit by a U.S. official to the Kingdom in the space of two weeks. It says that these visits show that the Kingdom has become the key to peace and security in the region.

It adds: The civilized world today, without exception and particularly the biggest and most powerful state, is aware of the fact that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a state of principles and stands, and that it has never at any day worked for aggression or the demolition of the bridges of confidence between itself and anyone. The opposite is true.

It emphasized that Saudi Arabia has been and still is by virtue of its history, upright political values, and its vast potentials, a prop for peace and a cornerstone for any desired move toward the development of the region for the benefit of its peoples. [passage omitted]

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Regime Detains Two U.S. Citizens Near Kuwait Border

UN Announces Detention

LD1703214395 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 2045 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission [UNIKOM] has announced here tonight that two Americans had crossed by mistake into Iraq where they were detained there.

The UNIKOM spokesman,Salim al-Fah'mawi, told KUNA that "on 13 March, two American nationals crossed the Kuwait-Iraq borders by mistake and were detained at the UNIKOM headquarters at Um Qasr at the entrance of the United Nations' officers building."

"After being denied entrance to the UNIKOM building and their attempt to go back, they were detained by the Iraqi police and were taken inside Iraq," he added.

Envoy at UN on Detention

NC1803064095 Paris AFP in English 0046 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Washington, March 17 (AFP)—Iraqi authorities detained two U.S. nationals and were holding them Friday [17 March] after a car the two were travelling in apparently strayed across the border from Kuwait, U.S. and United Nations officials said.

The incident marked the first case of a U.S. citizen being detained by Iraq at the border in nearly two years.

UN spokesman Salim al-Fah'mawi told CNN the the U.S. nationals were in a vehicle attempting to visit the headquarters of a UN observation mission known as UNIKOM [UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission] at the Iraqi port town of Umm Qasr when they were taken Monday.

"As they were trying to return from where they came from, they were apprehended by Iraqi police and taken into Iraq," the UN spokesman said.

The names of the two Americans were not immediately available.

A State Department official said the two men were civilians working for defense contractors, but declined to elaborate.

"Our best guess is that they wandered across the border," said a U.S. administration official.

Iraq's Ambassador to the United Nations Nizar Hamdun said the Americans had crossed the border "illegally" and that talks were under way in Baghdad concerning their fate.

"Those guys have crossed the border illegally and they are under the custody of Iraqi authorities," Hamdun told CNN.

"All this matter is under investigation right now in Baghdad and there are talks between us and the ICRC on this," he said referring to the International Committee of the Red Cross which Hamdun said had "enquired about them."

At the White House, spokesman Michael McCurry said President Clinton was informed of the matter and that efforts were being made to free the U.S. citizens.

The U.S. Government knew the identities of the men and what they were doing in the area, but could give no further details due to privacy laws, McCurry added.

CNN said the two were trying to visit friends serving in the UNIKOM when they were taken.

"Obviously, we are doing what we should be doing to secure the expeditious release of the two missing Americans," McCurry said.

The United Nations said it was working in tandem with the United States to obtain the release of the two men.

"The UN has protested to the Iraqis," said Ahmad Fawzi, spokesman for UN Secretary General Butros Butros-Ghali.

UN sources said representations were made at the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border this week by UN personnel to obtain the immediate release of the two Americans. [passage omitted]

ICRC Attempts To Visit

NC1903110895 Paris AFP in English 0949 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Kuwait City, March 19 (AFP)—The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is still waiting for the Iraqi authorities to allow it to visit two Americans detained in Iraq last week. an ICRC delegate said here Sunday [19 March].

Iraqi authorities arrested two U.S. civilians Monday after they drove across the Kuwaiti border.

"We have asked the Iraqi authorities to visit the detainees (...) and our request is in process," said Arnold Luethold, ICRC delegate for the Arabian Peninsula.

He said the ICRC made their request to the Iraqi authorities the day after the Americans were detained and was "still awaiting a reply".

The Red Cross said Saturday it did not know whether the Americans were being held in Baghdad or in the south of the country.

Luethold said the Geneva-based ICRC was in direct contact with the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait and the

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Baghdad authorities. He refused to give any details about the two detainees. [passage omitted]

Al-Samarra'i on Coup, Opposition Activities

JN1703203195 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1815 GMT 17 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former chief of Iraqi Military Intelligence, "in the northern area of Iraq," by correspondent Salim Badawi in the studio—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Badawi] Your Excellency Staff Major General: Press reports have recently said that you led a coup attempt against the regime of President Saddam Husayn. First, how true is this information?

[Al-Samarra'i] Brother, revolutionary operations are being carried out and they are called the preliminary phase. These operations seek to provide an appropriate atmosphere for a larger and wider operation designed to topple the dictatorial regime in Baghdad.

This phase has succeeded, and we are still implementing it with brilliant success. Thus far, more than 450 military men from the Armed Forces have been freed. Moreover, large numbers of heavy and medium machine guns, large quantities of light weapons, a number of heavy guns, and some artillery shells have been seized.

[Badawi] Does this mean that you are in the process of carrying out specific operations against the forces loyal to the Iraqi regime and President Saddam Husayn? How true is the information that you carried out a futile coup attempt at the beginning of this month, especially through coordination between the forces in northern [Iraq] and the opposition forces in the south?

[Al-Samarra'i] Brother, we did not carry out a futile operation. In fact, we postponed a multi-purpose action. For approximately 10 days, we have been carrying out a series of operations we call the preliminary phase. Thus, we did not fail, and we are achieving brilliant success. The national forces are taking part in these operations. They include various factions from the Iraqi opposition; namely, the Kurds, the Arabs, the Shiites, and the Sunnis who all came together in a large historic national trend that seeks to topple the dictatorial regime in Baghdad.

[Badawi] Your Excellency Staff Maj. Gen. Wafiq al-Samarra'i: Until recently, you were the chief of Iraqi Military Intelligence...

[Al-Samarra'i, interrupting] I held the post of chief of General Military Intelligence. Afterward, I was transferred and I held the post of director general at the Presidential Office while retaining my military rank.

[Badawi] What made you change your position and join the opposition ranks?

[Al-Samarra'i] Saddam's injustice, his personal behavior, Saddam's tyranny and his continued repression of the Iraqi people, and his repeated aggressions on all neighboring states, which are fraternal states.

[Badawi] Your Excellency Staff Maj. Gen.: THE NEW YORK TIMES said you recently fled to Saudi Arabia. Is this true?

[Al-Samarra'i] I am now present on the perimeters of Karkuk Governorate, specifically at a distance of only about 50 km. I did not go to Saudi Arabia. Our brothers in Saudi Arabia are aware of this fact.

[Badawi] A self-posed question is: Can the opposition inside [Iraq] confront the regular forces and achieve the objective of toppling the regime in Iraq?

[Al-Samarra'i] Brother, the situation now is completely different from that in 1991 and 1992, and even in 1994. The opposition is now present throughout Iraq. It is a guided opposition, and the coming days will prove that it is a strong opposition that befits the reputation of Iraq's people and history. It will topple the dictatorial regime in Baghdad very soon, God willing.

[Badawi] But, there is the ever- present remark that the Iraqi opposition movement is a group of opposition movements and not one movement. The battles that have been raging for some time between the Kurds themselves in the north only shows how weak this opposition is and how it is unable to agree on one national program to confront the regime in Baghdad. What do you propose—what do you have to add to the project of uniting these Iraqi opposition movements?

[Al-Samarra'i] We always try to have the opposition united in words and deeds. However, certain circumstances in various parts of the world do not help to definitively unite the opposition. But, we work to unite the opposition in the field. This blessed move was initiated approximately 10 days ago. The opposition factions have started to rally around the main action programs and we are scoring brilliant success at this stage.

[Badawi] What about your contacts and the aid you receive from abroad?

[Al-Samarra'i] The truth is that the present movement is purely an Iraqi nationalist movement. The Iraqi resistance is unique in all the areas of the world because it does not get any sizable assistance, whether from Arab or non-Arab parties. We act and work with simple means but we are motivated by a strong determination, a determination based on justice. We aspire for freedom. We also depend a great deal on the fact that the real opposition is within Iraq. We carry out coordination and guidance, and we have constant contacts with them. The days to come will show, God willing, that the opposition within Iraq is in its best forms.

[Badawi] Staff Maj. Gen. Wafiq al-Samarra'i, the UN Security Council renewed the economic sanctions and

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the siege imposed on Iraq. You know very well that the Iraqi people are the first to pay the price of such a siege. As the opposition, how do you assess this measure by the United Nations, particularly the recent decision to renew the sanctions?

[Al-Samarra'i] We believe that the primary cause, and this is a firmly established fact, for the perpetuation of the sanctions is that Saddam Husayn is still in power and continues his tyranny and crimes. We are not just after something to eat. We want freedom and to enjoy freedom. This is one of the natural rights of any human being. We also call on the United Nations to compel the Saddam Husayn regime to implement the resolution on the partial export of oil to purchase medicines and food under UN supervision. If the sanctions are completely lifted from Saddam Husayn's regime, it will once again militarize the Iraqi people and use Iraq's resources for aggression. We want peace and for the people to enjoy the country's resources.

[Badawi] Staff Maj. Gen. Wafiq al-Samarra'i, thank you. I would like to remind that you are with us live from northern Iraq.

[Al-Samarra'i] Yes, on the perimeter of Karkuk Governorate. Thank you.

Regime Forces Reportedly Shell Kurdish Areas

JN1803210795 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At 2000 on 16 March, the Baghdad dictatorial regime forces shelled with artillery, tanks, and DShK's the areas of Kalak, the Khabatah housing complex environs, and the villages of Bishinyan and (Kawlasur).

Paper on Assassinations, Clashes in Kurdistan

JN1803101595 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0855 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Mar (INA)—Today's AL-'IRAQ says the series of assassinations in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region in northern Iraq warn of an explosion, which will occur in the next few days.

In a report from the northern region, the paper says that fierce clashes took place after Mas'ud Barzani felt that the agent Jalal Talabani cheated him to take control of Irbil and then refused to withdraw from it.

The paper added that Mas'ud Barzani threatened to take revenge on those whom he called "the young donkeys" who carried out the bombings in Zakho. Barzani described these bombings the "February tragedy."

The paper says observers expect these developments to lead to fierce clashes. This is especially the case since the Central Committee of the Kurdistan Democratic Party held an extraordinary session under Mas'ud Barzani on 13 March to discuss the latest events in the Kurdish area— the Kurdistan Autonomous Region.

AL-'IRAQ cites Mas'ud Barzani's radio as affirming that Jalal Talabani's group continues to pursue its dictatorial trend which stirred the ill-omened war. The radio also said the Talabani group bears the responsibility for the human and material damage resulting from the war, as well as the negative political consequences it will have on the Kurdish people. The radio further said: Those who fueled the war continue to reject any political, peaceful, and fair solution to the crisis and insist on getting recognition for their coup and to be rewarded for the aggression. We categorically reject this.

Paper: Talabani's Kou Senjaq Headquarters Attacked

JN1803113195 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1030 GMT 18 Mar

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Sulaymaniyah, 18 Mar (INA)—The Baghdad-based AL-JUMHURIYAH newspaper has said that the headquarters of Jalal Talabani in Kou Senjaq in the governorate of Irbil was recently attacked with various weapons by the Barzani followers. Four of Talabani's special guards were killed in the attack, including Akar 'Ali Nur, official in charge of protection, and three of his cars set ablaze.

In another development, the newspaper said that an American delegation led by a U.S. State Department official has arrived in the (?Qulijan) area in the city of al-Sulaymaniyah. The delegation met with Jalal Talabani in the wake of the clashes which erupted among the agent elements in the Kurdistan autonomous region.

KDP Reportedly Preparing Offensive Against Irbil

NC1803134495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1150 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Mar (MENA)—According to reports arriving from the autonomous area in northern Iraq, the headquarters of Jalal Talabani, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan chairman, in the Kristjaq [as transliterated] region, the city of Irbil has been under attack with various weapons by the followers of Mas'ud Barzani, chairman of the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP], for the past few days. The reports add that the attacks killed four of Talabani's men and inflicted material damage, including three cars belonging to Talabani which were burned.

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The reports point out that the attacks forced Talabani to leave his headquarters and he is now staying in the area of Faklajwalan [as transliterated].

The reports add that tension still prevails in northern Iraq and that Barzani's followers are getting ready to attack the strategic city of Irbil, which is currently controlled by Talabani's gunmen.

Fierce battles have raged for the past few days between the fighters of the two Kurdish parties in the city of Ruwandoz, which has been besieged by Barzani for over a month.

Opposition Force Reportedly Kills 5 'Henchmen'

NC1803160495 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On the night of 15-16 March, a force from the Unified Iraqi National Congress infiltrated the town of Tuz Khurmatu and assaulted an Iraqi forces intelligence post near the [name indistinct] factory in the Tuz Khurmatu District. The assault force destroyed the enemy post and killed five Iraqi henchmen and injured another. The force returned safely to base, praise be to God.

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Two Killed, Five Wounded in Hebron Attack

TA1903191295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Two Israeli citizens were killed and five were wounded in a shooting attack on an Egged bus at the Hazekhukhit junction in Hebron. Two of the wounded are in critical condition, and the other three suffered light to moderate injuries. The No. 160 Egged bus was fired upon while on its way from Qiryat Arba' to Jerusalem. A helicopter and an ambulance are currently evacuating the wounded to hospitals. The security forces launched searches and set up roadblocks in the area. Roadblocks were also set up in Jerusalem.

'Guardians of Jerusalem' Claim Credit

TA2003112295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An unknown group called the Guardians of Jerusalem - Hebron Department has assumed responsibility for the terrorist attack in Hebron last night. This came in a phone call to the AP office in Sidon by a man who identified himself as Hajj Ahmad.

Sources in Lebanon say this group is associated with an organization called Hizballah Falastin which operates in coordination with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad.

Israeli security sources doubt the veracity of the report, and say all indications show that it was perpetrated by members of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam squads of Hamas.

Political Parties React

TA1903201395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The opposition parties reacted to this evening's terrorist attack by saying that the terrorists were encouraged by the government's intention to pull the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] out of Palestinian population centers in Judaea and Samaria. This evening's fatal attack, the opposition asserted, was the terrorists' response to statements made by cabinet ministers about the intention to establish a Palestinian state.

Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the chairman of the opposition said that 'Arafat bears full responsibility for the attack.

Coalition Knesset members called for the rapid implementation of the separation plan.

Sarid: Palestinian State To Emerge Soon

TA1803135695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Yosi Sarid says that within a few months, after elections are held in the territories, the Palestinian state will emerge in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It will not be called that officially, but it will in effect be a state for all intents and purposes, except for external security, which will remain Israel's responsibility.

Minister Sarid told our political correspondent that the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is a positive development which will have a beneficial impact on relations between the Palestinians and Israel. He added that the line of separation, which is to be determined soon, will provide an initial and rather clear idea about the boundaries of the future Palestinian state.

Reacting to Minister Sarid's remarks, the Likud faction says that upon the end of the Purim festival the government has torn the mask off its real face. Knesset Member [MK] 'Uzi Landau said that what Rabin and Peres only stutter Yosi Sarid says unequivocally.

The Tzomet faction says that Minister Sarid's pronouncements expose the government's system of deception. Faction chairman MK Eli'ezer Zandberg told our correspondent Hayim Hecht that the public had better know that the government that spoke against a Palestinian state is the one that is in effect founding it.

Rabin: Labor Party 'Opposed to Palestinian State'

TA1903172295 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Yosi Sarid's trial balloon made the headlines, sparking angry reactions both in the opposition and in the Labor Party. Yitzhaq Rabin, speaking in Ramat Rahel today, referred to Sarid's remarks, as our correspondent Sefi Handler reports:

[Begin recording] [Handler] Yitzhaq Rabin today commented on Minister Yosi Sarid's remarks on a Palestinian state. The prime minister spoke with ideological firmness, albeit not angrily:

[Rabin] I told the cabinet that this is the minister's personal opinion which does not reflect the government position. The Israeli Government signed the Declaration of Principles [DOP] with the Palestinians' representatives, the PLO, and it does not refer to and is not committed to anything resembling a Palestinian state. The Labor Party is opposed to a Palestinian state. We support a Palestinian entity alongside Israel—not along the 1967 borderline. The form of this entity will have to be ironed out with the Palestinians and Jordanians during the permanent-arrangement stage.

[Handler] It appears that Yosi Sarid was indeed right when he said that the prime minister was not angry when he reacted to his remarks during the cabinet session. [end recording]

Government Said To Oppose U.S. Mediation With Syria

TA2003100195 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 20 Mar 95 p A5

[Report by Aluf Ben and 'Aqiva Eldar]

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[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The negotiations between the Israeli and Syrian ambassadors to the United States —Itamar Rabinovich and Walid al-Mu'allim—are starting today. Underlying the talks there is a dispute over the nature of the U.S. involvement in the talks. Syria demands that the United States "go up a step," become an active mediator, and present the parties with bridging offers of its own.

Dennis Ross, the American peace team coordinator, supports this trend, but Israel is firmly against it. Israeli sources said yesterday: "Israel's position is that the parties have to make the decisions, which is why they should run the negotiations themselves. First, we expect Syria to answer the basic question: Does al-Asad want peace or not?"

During his recent visit to the region, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said that the United States does not only relay messages between Syria and Israel, but also presents them with ideas and alternatives. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin rejected the remarks, saying that the U.S. role is only to relay messages.

The Israeli sources also expressed their displeasure with the expected visit by Ross to Jerusalem and Damascus in about two weeks to prepare the resumption of the military talks. According to them, "a more senior level of involvement is required to elicit progress because the parties will not make their stands more flexible for Ross. Also, it is impossible for Israel be asked to make concessions every time the talks resume. The Americans had better ask themselves if they have already prepared a reward for a settlement between Israel and Syria before they make demands on us." According to the sources, Christopher was offended by the confrontation he had with Rabin during their recent meeting in Jerusalem. [passage omitted]

'Classified' Report: Syria Opposed to U.S. Observers

TA2003110795 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 20 Mar 95 p 14

[Report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer]

[FBIS Translated Text] A highly classified report received in Jerusalem yesterday from the Israeli Embassy in Washington reveals that the Syrians are opposed to stationing U.S. observers on the Golan Heights in the context of a political arrangement with Israel. The Syrians claim that the United States is not a neutral country, since Washington sides with Israel in an absolute manner.

The Syrian position will probably be presented today in Washington, when the ambassadors of Israel and Syria to the United States meet for the first time since the suspension of their talks over three months ago. This position totally contradicts Israel's stance which favors only the stationing of U.S. observers on the Golan Heights. Rabin believes that only the United States can ensure the agreement with the Syrians and that this is the only possible way "to sell the agreement" to the Israeli public.

The updated Syrian position was relayed by a most senior Syrian source associated with the negotiations with Israel. The Syrian source conferred with Republican figures who updated the Israeli Embassy in Washington. The briefing was most probably given by Syrian Ambassador Walid al-Mu'allim, even though the report does not mention his name.

The full report was presented yesterday to Yitzhaq Rabin, Shim'on Peres, and other officials involved in the talks with the Syrians, and the following are its main points:

—The Syrians say there is a narrow window of opportunity, only until the summer of 1995, to make progress in the talks with Israel. They argue that if the negotiations drag into 1996 a situation could emerge where the Israeli-Syrian agreement is linked to progress on the Palestinian track, and particularly on the Jerusalem issue.

—Syria feels no commitment toward Jordan and the Palestinians, who did not coordinate their actions with it and signed separate agreements with Israel.

—Syria cannot accept an arrangement based on the Camp David model, since what was applicable to Egypt is not applicable to Syria. Unlike the Sinai Peninsula, which lies far away from Egypt's main cities, the Golan is 32 km away from Damascus.

—The security arrangements must be based on mutual balance [izun hadadi]. Syria says that this balance means not only land and it is not just a geographical term, but must be a balance that upholds the dignity of both sides.

—The Oslo accords (which were secret) did not bring peace and quiet. The Israelis got terror, and the Palestinians did not get the results they hoped for. The Syrians want overt negotiations.

—Syria demands that the observers on the Golan be from neutral countries, not U.S. troops. Syria does not need any favors from the United States, the high-level Syrian source said. We do not expect you to strike us off the lists of terror-abetting or drug- trafficking countries as long as we do not sign a peace agreement with Israel.

—Syria claims it adopted a series of confidence-building measures toward Israel but the latter did not pick up the gauntlet. In this context the Syrian source mentioned the interview given by Foreign Minister al-Shar' to Israel Television correspondent Ehud Ya'ari. He also mentioned the permit given to THE JERUSALEM POST correspondent David Makovsky to join Warren Christopher's entourage and visit Damascus.

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The Syrian source's Republican interlocutor remarked that the Syrians would benefit if they invited journalists holding Israeli passports to visit. The Syrian source answered that Syria was not aware of that. "Apparently we received bad advice from the U.S. peace team," the source said. "Our government had good intentions."

Rabin Permits 3,000 Palestinian Workers To Enter

TA1903093095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has approved another 3,000 permits for workers from the territories, thereby bringing to 25,000 the number of Palestinian workers in Israel. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem notes that those permitted to work in Israel are married men over the age of 30 who have permanent places of work.

Sne Denies Attempts to Topple Iranian Regime

TA1703135395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Efrayim Sne has said that Israel is not involved in any attempt to topple the Iranian regime, but at the same time noted that nobody in this country will be sorry if the ayatollahs are replaced by a sane government.

He told our correspondent Hayim Hecht that President Clinton's decision to bar the deal between Conoco and Iran is very important and signals the West's willingness to face up to Tehran's nuclear and terrorist threat.

Qahalani Returns From U.S. With Helms Letter

TA1903151995 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 19 Mar 95 p A4

[Report by Yerah Tal]

[FBIS Translated Text] Knesset Member Avigdor Qahalani over the weekend returned from his controversial trip to the United States on behalf of the Third Way. Qahalani returned with a letter from Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in which the senator states he will do everything possible to prevent the American taxpayer from financing an Israeli-Syrian peace.

The Republican senator also states he will lead the opposition to the deployment of U.S. troops on the Golan Heights.

Qahalani said that in his talks in the United States he had not tried to convince his American interlocutors to oppose the deployment of U.S. forces on the Golan, but rather spoke of the security dangers Israel would face and the danger to regional stability if Israel withdraws from the Golan. Qahalani believes that if the Americans are not deployed on the Golan, Norwegians, Swedes, or somebody else will be. Qahalani said that he and Yehuda Har'el, chairman of the Third Way, managed to raise some $100,000 which will suffice for financing a public information campaign against a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Activists in the Jewish community in the United States assess that Qahalani's and Har'el's information trip did not succeed.

'Stormy' Reaction to al-Tibi Comment on Druze IDF

TA1703140395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad al-Tibi's remarks that the Druze should be released from IDF [Israel Defense Forces] service because they find it difficult to fight the Arab people in Lebanon and the territories has set off a stormy reaction.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Ori Or, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, said Dr. al-Tibi's remarks are unseemly. Knesset Member [MK] Or believes that al-Tibi, who says that the conciliation process between Israelis and Palestinians is close to his heart, prefers to sow the seeds of separation between ethnic groups in Israel. The committee of Druze local councils expressed their disgust at and protested al-Tibi's remarks and said they represent blatant intervention in Druze internal affairs. The Druze believe in equal duties and rights. Deputy Knesset speaker Salih Tarif said the Druze regard themselves as part of the Israeli people who carry the burden of IDF service. National Religious Party Chairman Zvulun Hammer called the remarks a disgraceful attempt to incite the Druze. Tzomet MK Moshe Peled called on the attorney general to press charges against al-Tibi for inciting rebellion. On the other hand, Jamal Mu'addi, the head of the Druze initiative committee, expressed his support for ending the IDF's compulsory draft of the Druze.

State Budget, Interest-Rates Reductions Announced

TA1903180395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The governor of the Bank of Israel, Ya'aqov Frenkel, has announced a reduction in the interest rates by 1.5 percent. The governor made the announcement at a joint news conference in Jerusalem with Finance Minister Avraham Shohat. The finance minister welcomed the governor's announcement, but the president of the Industrialists Association, Dan Propper, said 1.5 percent was not enough. [passage omitted]

Earlier, the cabinet adopted the Treasury's newest economic proposals. Ten ministers voted in favor, while three were opposed, Ya'aqov Tzur, Ya'ir Tzaban, and

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Efrayim Sne. Three other ministers abstained. The plan cuts the state budget by 1.2 billion shekels and income tax by the same amount from September. The plan also requires a 2 percent reduction in the work force in government ministries and other government supported bodies. [passage omitted]

Reacting from the opposition, Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu called the plan of the Treasury a step in the right direction, but he said the government cannot be counted upon to continue with a consistent policy. If it does, Netanyahu said, we would welcome it.

Shares on the Tel Aviv stock market shot up in anticipation of an announcement on dropping the interest rates. The Mishtanim index finished the day up by 6.4 percent to 171.3. The Ma'of climbed 6.19 percent. Trading volume was about 130 million shekels.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1600 GMT on 19 March adds: "Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin says he supported a cut in the state budget in order to enable the government to reduce taxes, aid economic growth, and fight inflation. Rabin said that next week the finance minister will propose to the government several alternative ways of reducing the income tax. Rabin also said that during the summer, when the government discusses next year's annual budget, ways will be examined to further reduce direct taxation."]

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U.S. Senate Vote on Debt 'Highly Positive'

JN1803080295 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Amman—Jordan on Friday [17 March] welcomed as positive a U.S. Senate approval of $275 million in expenditure to write off about $480 million in Jordan's official debts to the U.S. and expressed hope that the move would pass through Congress.

The Senate move, on a supplemental bill presented jointly by the dominant Republicans and minority Democrats, came Thursday. The bill authorised an expenditure of $50 million to write off about $115 million in Jordan's debts in fiscal 1995 (ending Sept. 30, 1995) and $225 million to cancel the rest in fiscal 1996 (ending Sept. 30, 1996).

The Senate proposal was initiated by the Clinton administration after the House of Representatives slashed to $50 million an administration request for $275 million.

The next step is a conference of the Senate and the House of Representatives to reconcile the two versions of the bill. More often than not, such conferences, designed to settle Senate and House differences on bills, come up with compromises of half the amount.

But, a senior Jordanian official said, the Clinton administration appeared to be confident that the full allocation would be approved by the two houses of Congress.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who held talks with His Majesty King Husayn in Amman on Monday while in the region in a bid to advance the Middle East peace process, "expressed confidence that the entire amount will be approved by Congress," the official told the JORDAN TIMES.

"It is highly positive move, given that it was introduced jointly by the Republicans and Democrats," said the official, who declined to be identified. Since it was a bipartisan proposal, the proposal stood all chances of congressional approval in its entirety. [passage omitted]

Under the formula adopted by the Senate on Thursday, the expenditure of the whole amount is approved, but the actual appropriation would come in two tranches.

"Jordan would have liked to see the whole move in one tranche," said the senior official. Although the write-off appeared to be certain, "you are not very comfortable until the actual move is formalised."

Foreign Minister Praises Vote

JN1803082295 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has expressed his satisfaction with the U.S. Senate's passage, with a majority of 97 votes in favor and 3 objections, of a bill to designate $275 million to finance the write-off of outstanding Jordanian debt to the U.S.

The minister said the last stage in Congressional approval requires holding a joint session of the foreign aid committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate, which are expected to convene in a few days.

U.S. Efforts To Move Israeli Embassy Criticized

JN1903150495 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission at the [Jordanian] House of Representatives has described as irresponsible a new campaign by some forces in the U.S. Senate to transfer Washington's Israel Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Mr. 'Abdallah al-Nusur said: The request runs contrary to Security Council resolutions, Palestinian national rights, the Madrid peace conference, as well as the Declaration of Principles between the Palestinians and Israel. He said: If adopted, the move will lead to great tension in the area, jeopardize the whole peace process, and provide enemies of peace with a chance to bring it to collapse. Mr. al-Nusur was commenting on a report that U.S. Senator D'Amato had secured the approval of 93 lawmakers to a draft law forcing the U.S. Administration to put it into action.

Foreign Minister Receives Iraq's Tariq 'Aziz

JN1803184095 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has met with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz, who made a stopover in Amman on his way to Baghdad from Rome.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the latest developments and reviewed the results of Tariq 'Aziz' tour, which took him to New York and Rome, and his talks with officials there.

Al-Kabariti and 'Aziz also reviewed the efforts being exerted to restore Arab solidarity and to bolster it on the basis of trust, mutual respect, and the Arab nation's higher interests.

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Ja'Ja' Admits Visits, Training With Israel

NC1703184695 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Judicial Council, chaired by Judge Philip Khayrallah, today continued to examine the case of Sayidat al-Najat church bombing, in which Samir Ja'Ja', leader of the dissolved Lebanese Forces, and his colleagues are accused. In today's session, the Council questioned defendants Samir Ja'Ja' and Fu'ad Malik.

Ja'Ja' said that the best way to ensure coexistence in Lebanon is a compound state [dawlah murakkabah] like Switzerland, for instance. But he stressed that this does not mean partition. [passage omitted]

Ja'Ja' said he visited Israel several times and met with military and political officials there. He said the relationship with the Jewish state was based on procurement of weapons and training of some elements. He denied any joint intelligence cells with Israel. [passage omitted]

Buwayz Views South, NPT, Syrian-Israeli Talks

NC2003103895 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 20 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, in Beirut, by Ashraf 'Abd-al-'Aziz, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Abd-al-'Aziz] Minister Faris Buwayz, we welcome you to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Buwayz] Thank you.

['Abd-al-'Aziz] Could you tell us something about the situation in south Lebanon?

[Buwayz] As you know, Israel uses south Lebanon or exploits the seething situation there to relax or camouflage the internal issues it must handle. In some cases, relations between the opposition and the government in Israel justify to the Israelis, that is, to the Israeli Government, any move to create a flare-up in the south. In some cases, Israel will use an upcoming visit by an important American or international envoy to the Middle East region, an envoy who might not have fully coordinated with the Israeli Government, or whose mission to the region is not fully agreed upon, to justify escalating things in the south to render the mission meaningless and change it from a political mission to a technical one. Of course there are the security considerations and things like that so that we can say that Israel truly benefits from the situation in the south to carry out political and security experiments.

The most important point is that Israel is now trying, through the siege or through these arrangements in the south, to undo the links among the state, the Lebanese public, and the Resistance, by giving the Lebanese public the feeling that all these problems stem from Resistance activities. It also creates an atmosphere of hostility between the Resistance and the people in the south. I believe that some statements—that Israel has resorted to personal alliances with some extremists with the intention of using the situation in the south—could also be true.

['Abd-al-'Aziz] Part of the talks during Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent visit to the region concentrated on the possibility of resuming negotiations, particularly since the announcement was made on resuming negotiations between the Syrian and Israeli sides on the ambassadorial level.

[Buwayz] Of course, what Secretary of State Christopher achieved regarding resuming negotiations is not something that is easy. The resumption of negotiations is positive and brings good tidings. But we cannot issue prophecies about the results of these negotiations. It is too early to decide whether these negotiations will succeed and whether they will realize basic and deep understanding. Proceeding from this point, I would like to say that Secretary Christopher's achievements are relative. They are not bad, but they are nevertheless relative; they have only touched on the form, but not the content, even if we accept that they are based on the principle of entrenching equal arrangements for the two sides.

['Abd-al-'Aziz] Will the resumption of negotiations on the Syrian track be followed by the resumption of negotiations on the Lebanese-Israeli track?

[Buwayz] The mere resumption of negotiations on the Syrian track is not enough. The progress of negotiations on the Syrian track, and whether they actually reach a progressive stage that will set our minds at rest regarding the seriousness of the Israeli stance, could have some bearing on and open the opportunity before the actual resumption of the Lebanese negotiations.

['Abd-al-'Aziz] Minister Buwayz, on 22 March the Arab League will celebrate its golden anniversary. The Arab League Council will hold its 103d session. Should we expect this historic session of the Arab League Council to be a real starting point for strengthening joint Arab cooperation and action?

[Buwayz] I believe that everyone realizes the sensitivity of the stage we are going through. All the Arab sides fully realize that we are facing a crucial turning point for this Arab nation. From this perspective, I believe that this realization must push us toward finding a basic minimum amount of Arab coordination and understanding. Undoubtedly, this occasion, that is, the 50th anniversary of the Arab League, with all the emotional and symbolic meanings it carries, must prompt us to find the common ground for understanding, coordination, and a united stance, even with regard to the basic minimum. We have so far seen that individual actions have yielded no one results; they have yielded no benefits for any side. We have seen that those who try to jump the gun ultimately pay the price of such haste and became hostages to this haste. Bypassing stages benefits no one. We should

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discover the real meanings of the 50th anniversary and change them into political realities.

['Abd-al-'Aziz] Minister Buwayz, south Lebanon is a permanent item on the Arab League Council's agenda. But there is a new item pertaining to the Lebanese hostages and detainees in Israeli prisons. Could you tell as about the draft item to be proposed to the Arab League Council?

[Buwayz] We have about 500 Lebanese detainees held in Israeli detention centers who have not been tried fairly; they do not know the charges against them. They are detained in centers that do not meet the basic requirements of human rights. They are not visited by international organizations; I should say that international humanitarian organizations are not allowed to visit them. From this perspective, this item will be listed among the permanent items of the Arab League Council's agenda as long as they are detained. Israel, in the past few weeks, released a few detainees and the bodies of some of those who died in these detention centers.

['Abd-al-'Aziz] Minister, among the topics listed on the Arab League Council agenda is Arab coordination regarding the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Egypt has expressed its stance on this issue. What is Lebanon's position on this Treaty?

[Buwayz] We have a permanent, firm, and continuous stance. This stance says that we cannot accept the Treaty as long as Israel, which is the basic nuclear factor in the region, does not approve it. Any other explanation, circumstances, or theories to contain this principle are considered hostile to the Arab countries.

The time has come to deal with every country according to one standard. The time has come for not having laws, regulations, and principles that apply to one without the other.

['Abd-al-'Aziz] Minister Buwayz, speaking to you on the phone line between Cairo and Beirut, we thank you and welcome you as our guest on the Voice of the Arabs.

[Buwayz] Thank you.

Egyptian Envoy Comments After Meeting Buwayz

NC1803115895 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Egypt's Ambassador in Lebanon Abu-Zayd 'Umar met with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz this morning. Afterward, the ambassador said he had passed on his government's request for information on the outcome of the European-Lebanese Cooperation Council meeting and Minister Buwayz' talks with European officials. He added: I learned Minister Buwayz' views and evaluation of the peace process. He noted that the meeting comes before Minister Buwayz' trip to Cairo next week to participate in the Arab League Council's 22 March ordinary session and that he asked if Buwayz had any specific suggestions or requests.

Israeli Shelling Kills UNIFIL Soldier

NC2003074195 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Israeli occupation forces' artillery in al-Zaffatah shelled the areas of al-Jabal al-Rafi' and al-Wadi al-Akhdar in Iqlim al-Tuffah at 0400 today. Flares were dropped during the night over the al-Litani River basin, and the Israeli forces raked the areas around their position in al-Suwayda' while an Israeli reconnaissance drone overflew al-Nabatiyah. [passage omitted]

The shelling of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon's [UNIFIL] Nepalese contingent in Yatar yesterday, from occupation forces' positions in Jabal Humayyid, killed one Nepalese soldier and wounded three. A UNIFIL helicopter flew in immediately and evacuated the wounded soldiers to al-Naqurah hospital. [passage omitted]

The Lebanese Resistance Brigades-Amal said in a statement issued yesterday: On the 10th anniversary of the martyrdom of Resistance leaders Muhammad Sa'd and Khalil al-Jiradi and the anniversary of the Ma'rakah Mosque massacre, a unit attacked the 'Alman and al-Shumariyah positions with machine guns and rockets. The statement added that the unit engaged garrison troops, heavily damaged their weapons and fortifications, and inflicted casualties. Soldiers at the enemy position in al-Bayyadah raked the valleys and forests near al-Mansurah and Majdal Zun with machine-gun fire. [passage omitted]

Israel Blockades Port; Dallul Departs for UAE

NC1803133195 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli gunboats are continuing their blockade of Tyre Port. They are preventing fishermen from sailing more than one km from port. The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent says caution prevails in the fishing port as an Israeli gunboat has been cruising off the Tyre Coast since dawn.

Meanwhile, the occupation artillery stationed in al-Dabshah bombarded the vicinity of the derelict Lebanese army barracks in al-Nabatiyah and the 'Ali al-Tahir woods at dawn today, using 82-mm mortars.

Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul said that for the first time Israel has retreated in the face of the hard public and official stands in Lebanon and because of the alertness and solidarity at both the official and public levels in Lebanon on the 14 March celebrations of the day of Lebanon. He added that the deceptive bridges, which some people thought they would be able to reinstate, were brought down. He made these remarks in a public gathering attended by Deputy Sami al-Khatib and a number of key figures and citizens while on a visit to 'Ayta al-Fakhkhar town.

Minister Dallul left for the United Arab Emirates [UAE] today to represent Lebanon at the Dubayy Air Show, due to open tomorrow.

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Press: Full Withdrawal Should Top Talks in U.S.

JN1903104195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 19 Mar 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a comment, AL-THAWRAH says Syria's positions are appreciated by the entire world, particularly the United States, the sponsor of the peace process. The paper attributes that appreciation to the fact the international community and the cosponsors of the peace process, especially the U.S. sponsor, have sensed Syria's sincere intentions and orientations toward peace as a strategic option. Syria's constructive positions have contributed to rescuing the peace process more than once when it was in danger of collapse, thanks to Israel's aggressive and terrorist practices.

AL-THAWRAH notes that Syria has expressed readiness to meet the requirements of peace on the basis of full peace in return for full withdrawal. Syria understands that security arrangements should be based on fairness, balance, and equality [al-tasawi] in everything. The paper says there should be nothing in peace which should strengthen a certain party at the expense of another or gives a certain party a chance to dominate other parties on security pretexts.

AL-BA'TH says that since the announcement that Syrian-Israeli talks will resume at the ambassadorial level in Washington, the Rabin government—as usual—has been launching a media campaign designed to achieve a set of objectives. In this context, Labor and Likud have been exchanging roles anew. While the Likud rejects any withdrawal from the Golan, Labor proposes partial withdrawal, so on and so forth.

AL-BA'TH says Israel and the Rabin government in particular are trying to ignore the opportunity Syria has offered to reactivate the peace process. Israeli statements on concessions have nothing to do with reality. If Israel explicitly and clearly declares its intention to withdraw from the Golan and its readiness to arrive at an equitable [mutuakafi'] peace, then it would only be honoring the principles and bases of the peace process.

AL-BA'TH stresses that Syria has done everything possible to boost the peace process to achieve security and stability in the most dangerous area in the world. The paper says that Israel continues its political maneuvers, hoping to impose peace the Israeli way on Syria and Lebanon. If it continues this conduct when the Washington talks are resumed, then Israel will be confirming that it is not working for peace and that it is defying international legitimacy and rejecting the peace initiative.

Under the headline "Equitable [mutakafi'] Security," TISHRIN says that a just, comprehensive peace that gives each party its rights, removes the occupation, and restores the territory and rights is the actual and true guarantee of security. Not even 100 agreements nor 1,000 security arrangements can provide security and stability unless they are based on a sound basis of justice and international law. The paper notes the failure of the talks which were held in Washington when Israel turned the issue of security arrangements into a way to blackmail Syria and harm its sovereignty over its territory. The paper adds: Israeli officials have reiterated that the expected Washington talks should focus on security arrangements. For its part, Syria believes that comprehensive withdrawal from the Golan should be at the top of the agenda. There is no peace without Israel's commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan.

TISHRIN says that Israel is exploiting the security arrangements issue to sabotage the peace process and shatter all hopes pinned on it. Security arrangements, the paper notes, should be the outcome of an agreement on full withdrawal and peace, not vice versa. Security arrangements should be balanced on both sides of the 4 June 1967 truce line.

TISHRIN concludes: Syria has joined the peace process and responded to the U.S. and international efforts from a strong position. It does not all intend to give up an iota of its national soil or any of its rights or to succumb to the twisted Israeli logic on peace and security. A just, comprehensive peace is the basis of peace. Before anything else, a just, comprehensive peace requires full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

TISHRIN: Peace Process Needs 'New Dynamism'

JN2003081095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 20 Mar 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, TISHRIN discusses the resumption of the peace talks in Washington. Under the headline "The Washington Talks," the paper says that all facts show that Israel and the Rabin government continue maneuvering to evade the requirements of peace. It says they have not explicitly and openly announced a readiness to withdraw from the Golan and southern Lebanon or to actually commit to the principle of giving back the territory in return for peace.

TISHRIN says that this proves that Israel is still living under the illusion that it can drag Syria into bargaining over its territory and rights. The paper says that having agreed to resume the talks, Syria does not have the least doubt that the peace process needs a new dynamism to save it from the Israeli illusions, ideas, and deceptive proposals. To make this possible, Israel must change its position and acknowledge that peace and occupation are mutually exclusive. Israel must also acknowledge that partial solutions and separate deals do not make regional peace, and that security arrangements must be balanced [mutawazinah] and equal [mutasawiyah].

TISHRIN adds: Syria is the cornerstone of the peace process. The sought after peace cannot be achieved without Syria. It has been proved that the Syrian position constitutes the real guarantee for maintaining Arab

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territory and rights. There is no way that the Israeli terms circumventing the bases of the peace process can be acceptable.

Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN says that if one is to look forward to positive and constructive talks in Washington on the Syrian track, there first must be a full Israeli commitment to withdrawal and to a genuine and earnest implementation of the resolutions of the international legitimacy on the basis of which the peace process started and continued, especially the land-for-peace principle and the return of the Israeli occupation troops to the 4 June 1967 lines.

Radio Demands 'Equality' in Peace With Israel

JN1803173395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1239 GMT 18 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Once again, Syria is responding to U.S. efforts and is giving peace another chance by agreeing to resume Syrian-Israeli negotiations with intensive U.S. participation. And, once again, the world and the U.S. cosponsor have confirmed Syria's true intentions toward peace and its welcoming response to anything it takes to put the peace process back on the right track and to achieve its desired goal by establishing a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees security and stability in the region.

With great appreciation, the international community has acknowledged Syria's concern for peace and its serious contribution to rescuing the peace process from collapse on more than one occasion as a result of Israel's hostile practices and intransigent stands—stands that adhere to proposals in line with schemes to continue the occupation and to impose hegemony over the Arabs and their resources.

Syria's stand, which is concerned about peace, proceeds from the fact that peace is a strategic choice, as Syria always reiterates. This choice is in line with international legitimacy and the international trend. It also employs the U.S. initiative in the interest of a just and comprehensive solution based on UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, as well as the land-for-peace principle.

If returning to the Washington talks constitutes a new chance to rescue the peace process from collapse, then success in achieving real and tangible progress in these talks will remain dependent on the stands Israel offers and the ideas it proposes. This success will also remain dependent on the U.S. Administration's ability, through its direct participation, to convince Israel to submit to the principles of right and justice and to respond to the requirements of peace in accordance with what is stipulated in the Security Council resolutions.

The Syrian response to U.S. efforts to rescue the peace process and to give it an effective push forward puts Israel to the test once again. This is not the first time that Syria has taken the initiative to help rescue the peace process. Moreover, it is not the first time that Israel has failed a test of its credibility on the ground.

In this case, it is natural to say that any real rescue for peace will depend on Israel's submission to the requirements of peace and on its response to the bases of peace guaranteed by the frameworks of the Madrid conference. The standard for real progress will remain dependent on Israel's recognition of the principle of a full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. Every Israeli prevarication to escape from this reality will empty the U.S. efforts of their content and will lead to the abortion of these efforts, which will put the peace process before some difficult questions. We do not think that by going back to its impossible conditions, old and new maneuvers, useless wrangling, and dated proposals, Israel could offer anything new or useful to push the peace process forward. Moreover, we are not unaware that Israel has excelled in the methods of prevarication and that it has many methods of deception and procrastination up its sleeve through which it disavows the principles of international legitimacy and the bases and requirements of peace.

However, if the Washington talks are to achieve real progress on the road to a just and comprehensive peace that fully restores territories and rights to their owners and guarantees everyone's rights and interests, then there is no alternative to Israel's recognition of a full withdrawal and implementation of Security Council resolutions by withdrawing to the 4 June 1967 borders. Moreover, the issues of security and security arrangements are mutual commitments that can only be established on the bases of equality and equity [al-tasawi wa al-takafu']. This is because a just, comprehensive, and honorable peace is a peace based on evenness [tawazun] and the end of disruption [al-khalal]. Moreover, it is a peace based on removing the occupation, restoring rights to their legitimate owners, achieving everyone's interests, and maintaining the dignity of all.

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Afghanistan

Guns 'Silenced' for First Time in 3 Years

BK2003071395 Hong Kong AFP in English 0701 GMT 20 Mar 95

[by Terence White]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, March 20 (AFP)—The guns were silenced in Kabul on Monday [20 March], as, for the first time in three years, the Afghan capital was controlled by just one faction, and was out of range of rivals' rockets.

Forces loyal to President Borhanoddin Rabbani were able to consolidate their hold on Kabul after pushing the Taleban student militia further away from the city.

The frontline nearest to Kabul was close to Maidan Shahr, 30 kilometres (20 miles) southwest of the city. Most of the rockets have a range of 20km. The Taleban on Sunday fought off an assault by the forces of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, military chief of the presidential camp.

Since the fall in 1992 of the communist regime, Kabul has been the scene of intense fighting between half a dozen rival factions in which more than 20,000 people have died.

In Islamabad, Mas'ud Khalili, Rabbani's special representative, expressed the hope that the citizens of Kabul would be able to celebrate the start of the Afghan new year, on March 21 "without rockets for the first time".

The present military situation was thanks to the continuing efforts of the United Nations in seeking a rapid transfer of power from Rabbani to a coalition body.

Last month the United Nations chose March 21 as the date for the transfer of power. This was not now possible. But Mahmoud Mestiri, head of the UN peace mission, said, the process should still go ahead before the end of the month.

Rabbani's mandated two-year term ended last December.

Khalili told AFP the transfer of power would not be an easy process: "I wonder why he (Mestiri) set a deadline. The peace efforts should not be calendarwise. It should be processwise," he said.

The United Nations, which attempted last month to put a mechanism in place for the transfer of power, gave up due to opposition from Mas'ud and Taleban.

The new peace formula foresees the formation of a "national council" of around 80 members, including two representatives from each of the thirty provinces, and twenty others chosen by the United Nations.

According to sources close to the UN peace mission, the United Nations hopes to install the future government at a neutral venue, such as Jalalabad in the east, where the political situation is relatively stable.

However there is nothing to suggest that such a plan has Rabbani's support. Khalili summed up the presidential camps position: "We don't want to use our military victory in a wrong way. We will use our military gains for the unity of Afghanistan.

Taleban Group Reportedly To Continue Talks

LD1903114195 Tehran IRNA in English 1112 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Mar. 19, IRNA—Taleban, Afghan religious student militia will continue to coordinate with the efforts of the United Nations to sort out the simmering conflict in their war-battered country, said a U.N. press release issued here on Sunday [19 March].

"The Talib Shura (has) asked that the United Nations special mission continue its discussions with the Taleban movement," it said.

U.N. special envoy on Afghanistan Mahmoud Mestiri sent the Afghan working group, established by the special mission, to Khost to meet with Taleban leaders besides provincial leaders of Paktia, Paktia and Khost.

The group first met with Maulvi Insanullah, governor of Khost, and the Talib Shura, composed of more than 25 people.

The working group discussed in detail the United Nations proposal for a national council or mechanism based on provincial representation and a national security force.

The group later met a gathering of over 500 tribal leaders and representatives of the provinces of Paktia, Paktika and Khost.

The chairman of the group briefed them on the details of the U.N. peace plan.

Mestiri is to meet the group today in Jalalabad.

Government Forces 'Victorious' Against Taleban

LD1903113195 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Latest reports from Afghanistan indicate that government forces have been victorious over Taleban forces. The extensive version of the news is reported by our colleague from Kabul.

[Correspondent] In a fierce fight this morning, forces loyal to Borhanoddin Rabbani captured all the bases belonging to the Taleban group in Charasyab [name as received], 25 km south of Kabul.

During this fighting a large number of Taleban forces were captured and 17 tanks, a large number of missile

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launchers, two helicopters, and several ammunition dumps were seized by government forces.

Government forces passed Charasyab and captured parts of the Logar Province, including Mohammad Agha township.

A spokesman for the Afghanistan Defense Ministry said following the capture of the Charasyab, the opposition has lost the ability to attack Kabul or bombard the city.

The advance of forces loyal to Borhanoddin Rabbani in south Kabul is their most important in the past three years.

Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kabul.

Capture Strategic Teleban Positions

LD1703153195 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Strategic and elevated positions and seven fortifications of the so-called Taleban group have been captured by the Mojahedin and the Islamic Army forces in southwest Kabul. Reports received by the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY say that the infantry of the Islamic Army, backed by the Air Force and artillery, this morning captured 10 fortified positions and heavy weapons firing points of an unidentified Taleban group. As a result of a lightning operation, strategic and elevated positions in Qatarsang, Palang-I and Palang-II and seven fortified positions of the enemy were captured in the south and southwest of Kabul by the Mojahedin and the Islamic Army forces.

During the operation 37 of the sold out people were killed and a large number of others were ousted from the battle line. A tank and a BMP, 18 Kalashnikovs, a PK machinegun, 2 RPG rocket launchers, a [word indistinct], and 4 motor vehicles of the Taleban group were also seized by the Islamic Army forces. One enemy BM12 multi-barrel rocket launcher was destroyed.

The report says that the enemy has lost its combat morale and at any available opportunity runs away from its positions, and it refuses to remove its fallen people from the battlefronts. In another report, the hated so-called Taleban group last night launched two unsuccessful attacks from the direction of Maydanshar on the positions of the Islamic Army and the Mojahedin. Very quickly their attacks were aborted and they were forced to retreat after suffering heavy loss of life. They left some of their combat equipment on the battlefield and fled. The advance of the Islamic Army forces toward determined targets continues.

Taleban Driven From 'Key Base'

BK1903091295 Hong Kong AFP in English 0804 GMT 19 Mar 95

[Report by Terence White]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 19 (AFP)—President Bornanoddin Rabbani's forces on Sunday [19 March] dealt a new blow to the Taleban army of Islamic students, driving them out of a key base south of the capital. Barely a week after being forced out of Kabul, the Taleban lost their strategic stronghold at Chahar Asiab, 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of Kabul, correspondent said.

Presidential forces, backed by tanks, launched a dawn attack on Taleban lines. The student fighters retreated south after putting up little resistance in a battle that lasted less than an hour, reports said.

The Taleban took Chahar Asiab from the Hezb-e Eslami faction of ex-premier Golboddin Hekmatyar last month after a quick succession of victories against other mojahedin factions in the provinces.

But having forced their way to the fringe of Kabul, the Taleban were forced back weekend by Rabbani's military commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud.

On Sunday morning, an AFP correspondent visited Chahar Asiab and a military base nearby which still has heavy artillery guns and helicopters belonging to Hekmatyar.

Rabbani's forces continued their push south against the Taleban and have set up a new frontline about 10 kilometres (six miles) from Chahar Asiab.

Afghan sources in Islamabad earlier Sunday said the Taleban had taken southwestern Nimruz province.

Nimruz fell to the militant students under an arrangement with the local governor "without any fighting" Saturday, the sources said.

However, Afghan embassy spokesman Abdol Rahim, neither confirmed nor denied the report, saying, "I have no information."

The governor of Nimruz was "very close" to Taleban and negotiations had been going on for the past few weeks between the provincial administration and the Taleban, said one source who did not want to be named.

Nimruz would be the 10th province taken over by the militant Taleban movement since it surfaced last autumn with the capture of Kandahar province.

Afghan sources said the fall of Nimruz would strengthen Taleban's position in nearby Farah province where the country's second biggest air base Shindand is located.

Afghan sources said Taleban had made some gains, but the Shindand base was still in government hands.

Several Taleban Members Captured

LD1903182495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Several captured members of the Taleban group, in an interview

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broadcast on Kabul television last night, confessed that they were former members of the Khalq faction of the communist party of Afghanistan.

Rabanni's Forces Successful in Provinces

190 Militiamen Killed in Samangan

LD1903172795 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] As a result of operations carried out by the forces of the Islamic Army in Samangan Province, 190 militiamen were killed and 600 others surrendered to Mojahedin forces.

Reports received from the province by BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY indicate that the Mojahedin of the Islamic Army had began a series of clearing operations in Samangan Province in order to ensure order and tranquillity. In the course of the operations carried out under the command of Haji Habibullah, Abdol Hakim, and Nurrolah, the militiamen were cleared from vast regions of Dara-e Suf district. Law and order was restored in those regions.

In the course of these operations 190 enemy men were killed and a large number of them were put out of action.

In addition, 600 of them joined the forces of the Islamic Army. Mojahedin have seized a large quantity of light and heavy weapons along with various ammunition in the course of the operations. The fighting is continuing in Dara-e Suf's bazaar and Mojahedin are advancing to achieve [words indistinct].

'Pseudo-Taleban' Forces Cleared in Farah

LD1903173495 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In the course of successful operations carried out by the forces of the Islamic Army in the southwestern parts of the country, 100 [words indistinct] were killed. They were cleared from a vast region.

According to the reports from the southwestern parts of the country, addition to capturing the heights of Bakwa desert [Farah Province], the forces of the Islamic Army captured four key positions of the pseudo-Taleban militias in those regions.

The report adds: The forces of the Islamic Army advanced dozens of miles toward pseudo-Taleban militias and inflicted heavy casualties and losses of military means on them.

Reportedly, 100 dead militiamen were left behind in the war fronts and 25 of them were arrested.

As a result of a campaign by the national air force carried out against the fleeing enemy a large number of enemy armored and transport vehicles were set ablaze. The advances of the forces of the Islamic Army in those regions are continuing.

Islamic Unity Party Elects New Interim Leader

LD1903120895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Central Council of the leadership of the Wahdat-e Eslami Party [Islamic Unity Party] of Afghanistan, in an official statement, has appointed Professor Karim Khalili as the provisional head of the party. The statement said the decision has been taken after the repeated requests by the party's members, and after numerous consultations and negotiations.

Iran

U.S. Efforts To Impose Sanctions 'Futile'

LD1903123895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 19 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] U.S. President Bill Clinton is still pressing ahead with political-economic sanctions to further pressure Iran. Nevertheless there are reports on difference between U.S. officials over the success of the economic embargo on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The latest news in this regard is the report prepared by the U.S. Under Secretary of State, Peter Tarnoff. In his report, Mr. Tarnoff refers to some existing realities, expressing concern over the imposition of unilateral embargo against Iran. He is reported as saying that it seems difficult for America to persuade her allies in Group-7 to introduce sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. He has also pointed out that any hasty decision on sanctions will inflict more severe blows to the U.S. rather than [the] Iranian Government.

Political circles of the West believe that deepening of differences among American politicians has given way to differences of views on adopting a policy towards Iran. The differences could somehow be predicted, taken into consideration some major points. Firstly, informed observers believe that the U.S. policies against Iran have so far remained futile. The defeat of U.S. policy can be observed in the efforts that U.S. statesmen have made to encourage the European states to follow suit. The efforts have so far have been in vain.

The U.S. has experienced the same defeat in her policy when it tried to restrict Japan-Iran relations. Hence the success of imposing new sanctions against Iran can be seriously doubted. Furthermore the competition which the European firms are engaged in to cooperate with Iran leaves very little chance for the success of U.S. policy. U.S. statesmen have so far failed to understand the fact that no independent country would allow its foreign policy to be dictated by Washington. Obviously the Islamic Republic of Iran, by adopting the same independent policy, is no exception. Therefore the new efforts of

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America, made in line with the plan prepared by Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato, on introducing sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran is already a defeated strategy, the success of which cannot be guaranteed by leveling baseless accusations such as terrorism.

Clinton Order Against Oil Cooperation Viewed

LD1803210795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 18 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] 'Ali Akbar Velayati, Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign minister, in an interview with AFP in Bandar-e Abbas on Friday 17 March described Washington's recent efforts to impose new economic sanctions against Iran as futile.

Talking about the Clinton Administration's recent decision to isolate Tehran, Dr. Velayati pointed out that Iran does not need the United States economically, and the U.S. endeavor to impose economic embargo, on the contrary, is doomed to failure.

It is recalled that U.S. President Bill Clinton, in pursuit of the continuing endeavors of the White House against the Islamic Republic of Iran, issued an order last Sunday preventing U.S. companies from drawing plans and expanding the oil resources of Iran, claiming that the Islamic Republic of Iran's policies are seriously threatening U.S. security.

From the point of view of political experts the hostile policy of Washington is nothing new.

Mention can be made of U.S. hostility during the eight-year-old imposed war when America was engaged in offering military aid to Iraq.

Later on these enmities continued in the economic area, the only difference this time is American statesmen's fear of successes that Iran has achieved in the region and the world.

This has made America take even more hostile stance against Iran.

Meanwhile as has been stipulated by the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign minister, European companies are engaged in competition with American firms and no one is willing to give in to U.S. demands.

On the whole the situation is not as such to make independent countries kneel down or to make them sacrifice their national interests for America's illegitimate requests.

Also the fact should not be set aside that independent states would not allow the US to solve its economic and political problems at their expense.

U.S. Order Meets 'Ridicule'

LD1803143295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1125 GMT 18 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] A recent order issued by [President] Clinton banning U.S. citizens and and corporate bodies from cooperating with Iran for the development of its oil resources has met with surprise and ridicule from many political and news circles, particularly because in his order, in an unprecedented manner, the U.S. President has tried to defend his own right to take economic and global decisions for his country.

In the order, which was sent to the U.S. Congress, he has tried by referring to various documents and legal procedures to show his domestic opponents that his intervention in this matter was within the law.

Although the existence of a Republican majority in the U.S. Congress justifies many of the U.S. President's actions, news circles believe that he could have used easier methods to overcome his current severe problems and disagreements. Such moves not only cannot enhance the president's popularity to its previous level, but also show other weaknesses by the Democrats in their management of the U.S. foreign policy.

It is evident that under the current sensitive world conditions only wise and measured moves can resolve America's increasing domestic and foreign problems. Any childish and frivolous act in political and economic fields will bring nothing but loss of power and popularity for the Democrats. In this regard, it is quite certain that Clinton's recent order to that country's Congress demonstrates nothing but reaction and precipitate action.

Moreover, it is unwittingly to the benefit of his opponents inside and outside [America]; especially since the world aversion toward the U.S. international policies has increased the popularity and acceptability of the stances of revolutionary states in the world, such as Islamic Iran.

Moreover, the increasing Islamic tendency throughout the world has given the Islamic Republic of Iran particularities and a status which have clear differences and distinctions compared with other states that oppose America. It is the frustration caused by those differences and distinctions which forces many issues to be born in mind by the enemies of the people of Iran. Anyhow, many political experts believe that the taking of the recent decisions by Clinton was nothing but a cover up for the failures and many domestic problems, and a fruitless effort to overcome the problems which have been created by domestic and foreign opponents. Those efforts, to quote some some American officials, have no effect but to create fable and propaganda. Moreover they may create many problems for that country.

Radio Views Perry's Gulf Tour

NC1903185695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1745 GMT 19 Mar 95

[From the "News and Reports" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of his tour of the Persian Gulf region, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry

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arrived in the United Arab Emirates [UAE] today. His tour of the countries of the southern coast of the Persian Gulf will last for two days. Official U.S. sources said that Perry will discuss with officials in these countries ways of strengthening the U.S. military presence in the region. Washington did not conceal its desire to increase its forces stationed in the region or its interest in establishing new military bases in the Persian Gulf to augment this presence.

Naturally, William Perry's top priority in his tour of the region is marketing U.S. weapons to the regional countries. The Americans claim that their military presence in the Persian Gulf region and increasing their arms sale to the littoral Arab countries of the Persian Gulf are necessary to confront what Washington calls the Iranian and Iraqi threats. This is the ostensible side of the tour. The United States, as has been shown in the past few years, is pursuing its own goals. No one can forget that the United States exploited the crisis of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait to sell weapons worth dozens of billions of dollars to the countries of the southern coast of the Persian Gulf.

William Perry is trying to convince these countries to purchase further advanced U.S. weapons although these countries are unable to assimilate and use all these weapons. Perry is also visiting the international military fair in Abu Dhabi, which opened today as scheduled. The United Arab Emirates has annually held this fair since 1990.

Thus, it is clear that the goals of Perry's current tour of the Persian Gulf region is only intended to benefit the U.S. interests by convincing the Arab countries in the region to buy U.S. weapons as much as they can in order rescue the weapons factories in the United States. He is also seeking to convince these countries of the need to strengthen the U.S. military presence in the region. Washington is not concerned about the future of the peoples of these countries who are currently facing a growing financial crisis resulting from the high arms bills. Washington only thinks about its own interests and it knows full well that its military presence will only provoke tension in the region and, despite this, it insists on increasing its forces in the region.

Editorial Accuses U.S. of Bombing Karachi Mosque

NC1703160895 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 12 Mar 95 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "Terrorism, American Style!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Only 48 hours after the murder of two American diplomats in Karachi, the officials of the espionage organization, CIA, acted blindly and exploded a bomb at the Friday prayers in Karachi, which resulted in 40 persons being killed or wounded.

The swiftness with which Washington carried out this terrorist action can be considered a usual phenomenon and indicates that the United States is always ready to kill. The carrying out of such blind operations against victims who had not committed any crime is one of the ways in which the criminal United States appeases its fury and malice.

Even though no group has assumed responsibility for the shooting of two U.S. diplomats and the Pakistani police have arrested 60 persons on suspicion of involvement in this incident and the investigation continues, the U.S. officials—without even bothering to wait for the outcome of the investigation—exploded a bomb at a Friday prayer in Karachi and killed 60 Shiites so that their wrath and malice could be assuaged and they could settle scores with the Pakistani people. This raises certain questions.

It is a source of immense regret that after the bomb explosion, those Shiite worshipers who sought to escape from the debacle were fired upon by the Pakistani police when they were fleeing from the mosque and more were killed and injured in this manner. Thus it is not very clear what the reason was for the volley of shots fired by the police toward the defenseless worshipers. Was this done deliberately to increase the toll of the victims of the killing at the Karachi Friday congregation?

The obvious implication of this action on the part of the criminal United States is that according to the views of the Washington echelons, there is no need for seeking or investigating those who were responsible for Wednesday's [8 March] incident and whoever the United States kills in Pakistan will serve to alleviate its outrage and malevolence.

The blind explosion in Karachi on Friday is a fresh manifestation of the "U.S. terrorist rhetoric" according to which it is not necessary to identify those who were responsible for the attack. In the eyes of Washington, all the Pakistani people deserve to be killed just because two diplomat spies were killed for whatever reason.

Were the two American diplomat spies not the victims of a display of strength by the espionage networks in Karachi? Has not the United States deliberately killed them to initiate a new phase of violence and crime in Pakistan? Does Washington have any justification for the crime committed on Friday in Karachi? These and scores of other questions continue to arise and the "volley of accusations" continues to be directed toward Washington and its hirelings.

What occurred in Karachi on Friday went far beyond "capitulation" [preceding word in English] and proved that in the U.S. terrorist rhetoric, the sovereignty of governments or of law has no value. To satiate its anger and vindictiveness the United States is prepared to implement the law of the jungle in Karachi and to martyr a number of meek and defenseless worshipers in a state of prayer within the spiritual atmosphere of a mosque.

It is a source of immense astonishment that the Pakistani Government has not acted on its unceasing responsibility and that the police of that country fired on the

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remaining Shiite worshipers without any clear reason or logic. The Pakistani officials should demand an explanation from the United States regarding the criminal disaster of exploding a bomb in the Shiite mosque in Karachi and should warn it that the tainted hands of the United States have been clearly identified as being behind this heinous atrocity and that Washington is directly responsible for this major catastrophe.

Country Mourns Ahmad Khomeyni's Death

LD1803074595 Tehran IRNA in English 0702 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—A large group of mourning people have started marching towards Tehran university from various directions since early morning to participate in the funeral of Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni, the son of late Imam Khomeyni.

The Imam Khomeyni's only surviving son, Ahmad, died at Baqiyatollah Hospital in northern Tehran Friday [17 March] after six days in coma, plunging the country into grief.

The Tehran University today will see the Islamic people of Iran bid their last farewell to the beloved son of their late leader who by having led an Islamic uprising managed to give a new identity to the Iranian people.

According to the latest reports, all streets leading to Tehran Unviersity are filled with people beating their chest to mourn the death of Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni.

Waves of human beings all clad in black are seen moving towards Tehran University from various directions. Tehran's main streets such as Vali-e Asr and Enghelab are so crowed that mourners can hardly move.

Meanwhile, with the approach of the time for holding special prayers for the late Ahmad Khomeyni, the number of people arriving at Tehran University campus is increasing.

The presence of Iranian women, who have always been present on various scenes of the revolution, in today's ceremony is noticeable.

The late son of Imam Khomeyni was taken to the hospital Sunday morning after suffering a heart attack and severe brain damage.

He was pronounced dead brain at the hospital and despite the round the clock efforts of a medical team treating the imam's son, he passed away Friday afternoon.

The government declared today a national holiday and announced two days of public morning in memory of the late Ahmad Khomeyni.

No Third-Day Memorial Service Held

LD2003122495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The household of his eminence Imam Khomeyni has issued a statement regarding requests by various public groups to hold the [traditional] third-day memorial services for the late Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hajj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni.

The text of the statement is as follows:

The great and honorable Iranian nation. Your epic presence at ceremonies honoring the memory of a great man who had spent his whole life at the service of the Islamic revolution, the defense of the authority of the Islamic community, and the honor of the brave Iranian nation, cannot be explained but in terms of love. [passage omitted]

Many messages have been received from the great sources of emulation, the learned clergy, the Friday prayer leaders, theological schools, honorable officials, various groups from across the country and various parts of the world. They have all insisted on holding memorial services for that foundation of the leadership and the Islamic order.

We express gratitude for such extensive and indescribable emotions but since we are on the eve of the new year, we call on you the great nation to uphold the new year celebrations according to your tradition. No doubt, the pure spirit of that departed will be joyful at your action.

Therefore, the household of his eminence Imam Khomeyni will not hold the memorial services traditionally held three days [after the passing of a deceased].

However the memorial services traditionally held seven days after the death will be held on Thursday 23 March [3 Farvardin] at the holy shrine of Imam Khomeyni. [passage omitted]

Pakistan

Presence of FBI Investigative Team Criticized

BK1903102995 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 19 Mar 95 p 11

[Report by Kaleem Omar: "The FBI in Karachi Has Failed To 'Hoover' Up a Speck of Evidence"]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Karachi—What has become of the 50-man squad of FBI agents that flew into town on March 10 aboard a US military aircraft to help Pakistani authorities track down the killers of the two US consulate staffers—Gary Durell, a CIA communications technician (of whose presence in Karachi, the Pakistan Foreign Office reportedly had no record), and Jacqueline

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Van Landingham, a consulate secretary—gunned down on Sharah-e-Faisal on March 8?

The scuttlebutt on Saturday [18 March] was that despite the reward of up to $ 2 million offered by the US government for information leading to the arrest of these responsible for the killings the FBI agents have made no headway in their investigations and have decided to pack their bags and go back to Washington.

Some of them are said to have left already, while the rest are said to be getting ready to depart any day.

Meanwhile, according to Sindh police sources, there has not been any significant degree of contact between the FBI agents and police investigators working on the case.

A senior police official told this correspondent on Saturday that the FBI agents seemed to be pursuing "some agenda of their own" and only conferred with police officials when they wanted to check up on stray bits and pieces of information that they had picked up from somewhere and that, on the face of it, had "little or no bearing on the case."

The police official was skeptical about the FBI team chances of actually digging up any information that could be of real help in apprehending those responsible for the killings. "Perhaps, they are only here to prepare their own version of a historical record of the incident for posterity," he remarked sarcastically.

Although the police official was not prepared to say how far the police had got in its own investigations, he did say that if they succeeded in cracking the case, it would be "no thanks to the FBI." He said all that the FBI agents were doing was wasting the time of police investigators with their "naive questions."

This, however, was not the FBI agents' fault, he said, adding that Pakistani police officials would be equally at sea if they were to be suddenly sent to help with the investigation of a killing in, say, Los Angeles. "I blame those who sent them here, thinking they could achieve anything," he said.

In a message read at a special memorial ceremony for Durell and Van Landingham at the US consulate in Karachi on March 9, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher had said: "Let me assure you, and warn those who staged this cowardly assault, that the United States, working with Pakistan, will use every means at our disposal to bring those responsible for this crime to justice."

On March 12, State Department acting spokeswoman Christine Shelly had told reporters in Washington that the US government was "committed to working closely with Pakistani authorities to bring those responsible for this attack to justice."

Shelly had added that the Pakistan government had "requested the assistance of the US government in this investigation."

However, observers here believe that the Pakistan government's request for assistance and the US government's response in sending the FBI team to Karachi were both basically exercises aimed at political damage control, and that neither government really believed that the FBI agents could contribute anything meaningful to the investigation.

These observers argue that the real reason behind Islamabad's request for American assistance was that it did not want anything to jeopardise Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's forthcoming trip to the United States and therefore wanted to be seen by the Clinton administration as doing everything in its power to bring the killers to book.

By the same token, argue these observers, the Clinton administration's decision to send the FBI team to Karachi was motivated by a desire on its part to be seen by the American public as a government fully capable of acting promptly to protect US citizens overseas.

Be that as it may, it would be unrealistic to expect investigators from another country to be of much help in solving two killings in a city as big and as complex as Karachi is, and one, moreover, that has seen over 280 killings this year alone. If it were that easy, those responsible for some of the other killings would have been caught by now.

The difficulty inherent in the situation was even acknowledged by US State Department spokeswoman Shelly when she told reporters in Washington on March 12: "We have no additional information on who conducted the attack or what their motives were. And no one has claimed responsibility."

That, however, had not kept the Clinton administration from dispatching a team of FBI agents to Karachi post haste. Within 24 hours of their arrival, the FBI team had been taken under heavy police escort to Sharah-e-Faisal to witness a re-enactment of the shooting, causing traffic on the road to remain suspended for an hour and prompting hundreds of irate stranded commuters to raise anti-American and anti-government slogans.

A United States Information Service press release on March 12 had described the FBI as the lead US investigative agency responsible for investigating murders of US citizens overseas," which, the press release had added, were "a crime under US law."

A crime under US law they may be, but that still does not give the FBI the legal right to carry out investigations in other countries. All such investigations are the exclusive domain of the investigative agencies of the countries concerned. As one wag remarked, "It's the Federal Bureau of Investigation, not the International Bureau of Investigation." [passage omitted]

In some ways, however, the Hoover legacy lives on [in the FBI] to this day. Perhaps that was why President Bill Clinton said what he did on March 28, 1993, when he

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rose to address the annual Gridiron Club dinner in Washington, D.C., traditionally an evening for topical satire.

In the audience that evening was FBI Director William Sessions, then fighting a losing battle against accusations of abuse of office, and Clinton gave him no encouragement. "I might have to pick a new FBI Director," he grinned, "and it's going to be hard to fill J. Edgar Hoover's pumps!"

The question is: Are any of the FBI agents who have come to Karachi also given to wearing pumps?

Haqiqi 'Concern' About Presence

BK1903124095 Karachi DAWN in English 18 Mar 95 p 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, March 17: Muhajir Qaumi Movement (Haqiqi) Chairman Afaq Ahmad on Thursday [16 March] expressed his concern at the "mysterious activities of the US secret agencies men in the city."

In a statement, "the Haqiqi chief alleged that the US secret agents had been visiting sensitive areas and gathering facts for investigations into the killing of two US national which was a serious threat to Pakistan's integrity.

Mr Ahmad said the hectic activities by welfare organisations, US agencies and announcement by US Assistant Secretary of State Ms Robin Raphel regarding deployment of armoured personnel carriers (APC) in Karachi "is interference in the internal affairs of the country."

Cabinet Links Strike Call to Hillary Clinton Visit

BK2003115295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The ECC [Economic Cordination Committee of the Cabinet] has deplored the strike call given by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry [FPCCI] and noted that contrary to law, a segment of the Federation of Chambers is using its platform for political purposes rather than business. The ECC has appealed to patriotic elements within FPCCI to call off the strike call. It says the government on its part is ready to address their genuine grievances. The commerce and finance ministers have been assigned to work in this behalf and to hold talks with the business community. However, if the strike call goes ahead and any innocent citizen is harmed, the office bearers of FPCCI will be held personally responsible and proceeded against in accordance with the law. The ECC also noted that a segment of he FPCCI is closely associated with the leaders of the opposition. It had given a strike call on the eve of U.S. energy secretary's visit in September 1994. This latest call is timed with the coming visit of the U.S. first lady to Pakistan, obviously to discourage foreign investment and undermine the country's economic security.

The minister for law, justice and parliamentary affairs, Professor N. D. Khan, has appealed to the business community to reconsider the decision of their strike call for Saturday next [25 March]. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, he said there was no justification for the call as the situation [in Karachi] has started improving for the last one week. In this connection, he referred to the arrest of several wanted and hardened criminals. The minister feared that the motives behind the strike call were other than economic and law and order. He referred to their demands and said their nature reflects their political orientation.

Rangers, MQM-H Involved in 'Gun Battle'

BK1903124995 Karachi DAWN in English 19 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KARACHI, March 18: A gunbattle between rangers and the workers of Muhajir Qaumi Movement [MQM] (Haqiqi) paralysed Shah Faisal Colony on Saturday [19 March].

For the first time in four years, police used their helicopter to locate the positions of armed activists. Earlier, their two helicopters were mainly used by the VVIPs and senior officials of Sindh Police for official and non-official visits in the province.

Violence erupted in the locality after police fired in the air and used batons to disperse scores of women who had brought out a procession from Shah Faisal Colony No. 1 to protest against the arrest of innocent people by the police.

Witness said that soon after the procession was baton-charged, in which some of the women chanted anti-US slogans and set ablaze US flags, the area was paralysed by heavy gunfire.

Police also used their helicopter to locate the positions of Haqiqi activists firing at police and rangers.

The four-hour battle, which began in the afternoon, left three people, including two police constables wounded.

As sunset, heavy contingents of law enforcement agencies surrounded the locality and began a house-to-house search. Till the filing of this report, the search was continuing.

Officials claimed that initially the helicopter pilot was unable to locate Shah Faisal Colony. The pilot, who was mainly speaking English, was unable to affectively guide the police about the where abouts of the armed men.

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Those wounded in the shootout were identified as constables Abdul Razzak, Mohammad Abid and a passerby, Sabir.

A vehicle was also set ablaze by unidentified youths.

Shops and markets in Liaquatabad were shut down amid heavy shooting in the air after reports that the body of an MQM activist kidnapped on Friday was found in Essa Nagri.

Asad Kamaluddin, 25, was kidnapped by unidentified in Liaquatabad. [sentence as published] Later his bullet-riddled body was found in a gunny bag in Essa Nagri. His body was identified by relatives on Saturday [18 March].

Naeem was wounded in Liaquatabad, while Eadehash, 30, received a bullet wound in Orangi Town.

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